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Charges planned for Jackson's doc

CRIME Prosecutors plan to charge Michael Jackson's doctor with manslaughter rather than take the case to a grand jury, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press yesterday.

Prosecutors will file a criminal complaint against Dr. Conrad Murray, who practises in Houston, instead of taking the case before a grand jury, which is done in private, the official said. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

News on the Move

What's this barcode for?
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

Vancouver Games

Countdown to 2010

Follow Metro as we bring you daily coverage leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

• Today — High expectations placed on speedskaters, page 16

On the web

Visit metronews.ca for news updates

Leafs **Getting Giggy with it**

ABELIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Toronto Maple Leafs goalie Jean-Sebastien Giguere guards the net last night against the New Jersey Devils at the Air Canada Centre. Giguere became only the second Toronto goalie to record a shutout in his Leafs debut with a 3-0 victory. **More coverage, page 14. You can now keep up-to-date on your favourite teams and stats with Metro. Starting today, you can link to NHL summaries. Scan the barcode on page 14 for all of last night's NHL games.**

Van Doos or don't

Decision looms for Canadian soldiers helping out in Haiti

The Conservative government, which has enjoyed positive reviews for its handling of the Haiti disaster, needs to make tough decisions soon about whether to keep troops in the earthquake-ravaged country, experts say.

Haiti Crisis

About 1,000 soldiers from Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, Que., that were sent to Haiti are on a tight schedule. The same unit, the 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment, goes to Afghanistan in December and is slotted for combat training in Fort Irwin, Calif., this April.

That means the so-called Van Doos will have to be out of Haiti by mid-to-late March, just when defence analysts say security in the disaster zone may need to be increased.

"I just don't know how you maintain it, but by the same token I don't know how you pull out given that it's such a continuing human crisis," said Robert Huebert, of the University of Calgary.

A spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay lauded the work the military has done in Haiti, but acknowledged no decision has been made on whether the humanitarian deployment will be extended.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 9

TTC trip planner unveiled

TRANSIT The TTC has launched its long-awaited online trip planner, one of a series of customer-service improvements officials promised last week.

The planner, available at www.ttc.ca, allows riders to input a starting point and destination and get step-by-step directions, including the length of the trip and transfers.

The planner also provides walking directions and uses Google maps to outline the route.

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Local

Home winner donates to homes

Helen Ng, left, a Grade 5 student from North York, is a runner-up in the Meaning of Home contest — a national writing contest that received more than 1,500 entries. Students were invited to submit a short story, poem or essay expressing what home means to them. The prize? Helen dedicated a $5,000 grant, sponsored by Genworth Financial Canada, to Toronto Habitat for Humanity. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Scan this barcode for more Local news on your smartphone.
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of this page

News in brief

CRASH A man is dead and four firefighters were injured after a fire truck and a car collided north of Toronto. Investigators say a fire truck with lights and sirens activated hit the vehicle, pushing it into a traffic signal. The driver of the car, a man in his 50s, was rushed to hospital and pronounced dead. The firefighters suffered minor injuries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

Meet the candidates in tomorrow's Toronto Centre byelection at metronews.ca/local

Tomorrow's Metro

Comment

Steve Collins writes about the modern Canadian relationship in Relating.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Blogs Spindoctor tackles Toyota's woes, Tory Senate appointees, and the media reaction to Apple's iPad.

Video Government officials step forward to defend Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams' controversial U.S. surgery at **metronews.ca/canada**

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OPSEU urges teachers to vote against offer

Ontario's 9,000 college teachers will vote on a final contract offer after the colleges moved yesterday to take a deal already rejected by the union straight to the teachers.

The move came a day after the union set a Feb. 11 deadline for a strike that would curtail classes for at least 200,000 full-time students. While the union welcomed the vote it also urged its members to reject the deal.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union also slammed the colleges for failing to consider the open vote option sooner and agreed to push back the Feb. 11 strike date so members can vote.

"All along, the colleges had the legal right to present their offer to our members," OPSEU bargaining chairman Ted Montgomery said in a press release.

"They claimed that we were preventing our members from voting. Nothing is further from the truth."

> **"We hope faculty members conclude the colleges' offer is fair, reasonable and worthy of support."**
> Rachael Donovan, college's bargaining chair

Montgomery said he's confident teachers will reject the offer, which he said contains "significant takeaways" and fails to address issues related workload and academic freedom.

The province's 24 community colleges called on the Ontario Labour Relations Board yesterday to arrange a vote on the offer.

Last month, 57 per cent of college instructors voted in favour of handing the union a strike mandate.

"We believe the college's final offer is a fair and reasonable offer, especially in the current environment, and it is as far as we can go," said Rachael Donovan, the colleges' bargaining team chairwoman.

"We hope faculty members conclude the colleges' offer is fair, reasonable and worthy of support."

Donovan rejected the idea of binding arbitration, noting the decision of a third party isn't going to change the economic circumstances of the colleges. The union proposed the idea after setting the strike deadline Monday.

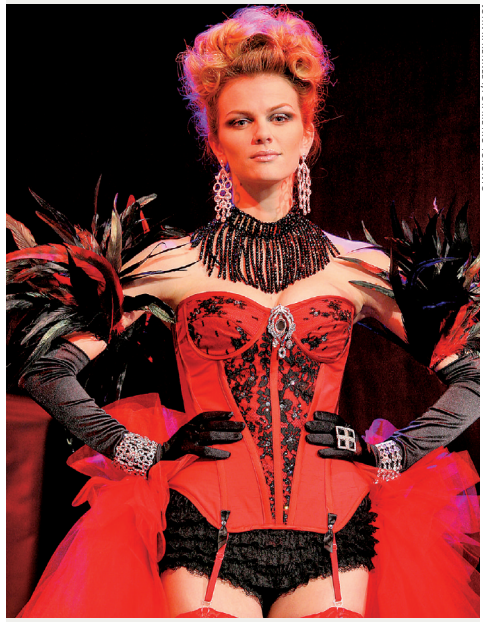
Both sides say they're committed to finding a solution that will be least disruptive to students.

They've urged the Labour Relations Board to set a vote date as soon as possible. THE CANADIAN PRESS

College's final offer

- 5.9 per cent salary increase to a maximum of $102,186 by Sept. 1, 2011.
- The colleges have said the deal was shortened to three years to address concerns the economic climate may improve.
- Workload protections contained in the last collective agreement are enhanced in this latest proposal.

Virgin Mobile **Fashionable phones**



JOHN R. KENNEDY/FOR METRO TORONTO

Victoria's Secret model Brooklyn Decker showcases a design by Farley Chatto commissioned by Virgin Mobile Canada as the company unveiled new phones and services yesterday at the Berkeley Church in Toronto.

News in brief

ULTIMATUM The two competing fall marathons, Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and the GoodLife Fitness Toronto Marathon, have been given two weeks to agree to change dates in an ultimatum from the city's public works committee. The city wants to either move one to the spring or cancel one and go with a single marathon. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Seized dogs are illegal pit bulls, City of Brampton says

CONTROVERSY Two Brampton dogs may face a date with the executioner unless their owners can prove they are not pit bulls.

The dogs, two-year-olds from the same litter, were seized from separate homes last month by animal services officers who told the owners they had characteristics of the banned dogs.

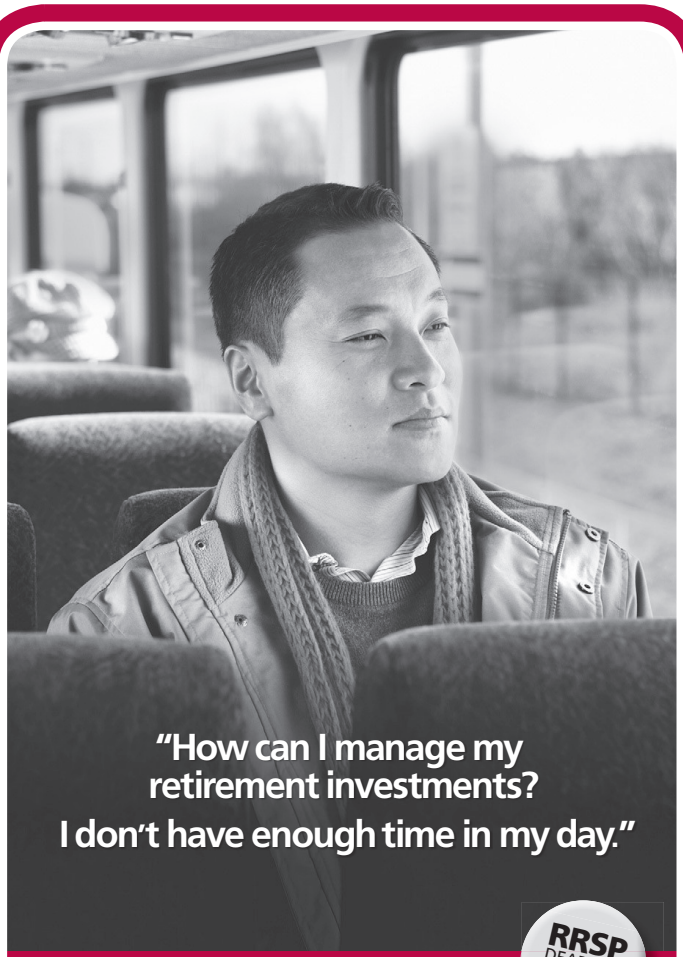
Rui Branco's family owns Jersey, the purebred boxer that gave birth to the litter of nine pups that included the two seized animals. The family also once owned Tyson, the brood's sire, who Branco said is an American bulldog. The city says Tyson was registered with Brampton as a pit bull and claims that a veterinary certificate proves it, said spokeswoman Miriam Mesbah.

But Branco and Joe Gaspar, whose family pet Rambo was also seized Jan. 13, have letters from four veterinarians and a company that inserts microchips under a dog's skin supporting their claims there is no pit bull in either dog.

One Brampton vet wrote that he would stake his 51-year veterinary reputation that Tyson was an American bulldog-boxer mix.

Yesterday, the city granted an extension to allow Branco's lawyer to challenge the dogs' lineage in court. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Post your comments about this and other stories at: **metronews.ca**



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Canwest protection extended
An Ontario court has extended Canwest Global Communications Corp.'s creditor protection until April 14. METRO NEWS SERVICES

TONY BOCK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO

Grade 5 students from Chalkfarm Public School, with help from Mayor David Miller, start the planting recently of City Hall's green roof, part of new green initiatives at Toronto City Hall.

Toronto the green

Canada's most sustainable big city, magazine says

When it comes to urban sustainability, Toronto has overpowered Edmonton in the big-city category and Vancouver has pulled an upset on two-time medium-city winner Halifax.

The fourth annual rankings by Corporate Knights magazine put Yellowknife, N.W.T., in first place for the third year straight.

According to the report released yesterday, Toronto snatched the No. 1 spot because its greenhouse gas emissions are 40 per cent below 1990 levels, regional trade initiatives have strengthened the local economy and the city has a growing middle class.

"Canadian cities are incubators for sustainable solutions," said Hilary Best, researcher at the Toronto-based magazine. "With the appropriate social, financial and governance tools to leverage these solutions, urban spaces become powerful launch pads for the sustainability transition."

More Torontonians also choose green commuting options and consume less energy in their homes.

The magazine assessed cities using 60 indicators in five sustainability categories: Ecological integrity; economic security; governance and empowerment; infrastructure and built environment; and social well-being.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Competition

- The big-city category included Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa and Montreal.

Students mourn classmates

VAUGHAN Grief counsellors were at a school north of Toronto yesterday, a day after two students died when their car smashed into a tree — the second traffic tragedy to hit the school within a month.

Students at Saint Joan of Arc Catholic High School in Vaughan told CTV the victims were Ryan Sheridan, 17, and Niko Di Iorio, 15.

A third boy, 15, is in hospital, and is expected to survive.

There was no school Monday and the boys were heading to a ski hill to go snowboarding.

York Regional Police say the cause of the crash is still under investigation, but they suspect high speed was a factor.

It's not believed the boys were racing.

On Jan. 12, Grade 12 student Steven Seixeiro, 17, was struck and killed by a tractor-trailer as he transferred buses. He was one of the 14 pedestrian deaths in the Toronto area in January.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Beds may close, hospitals warn

HEALTH The Ontario Hospital Association warns beds will be closed and services cut if hospitals don't get at least a two per cent funding increase this year.

The association's president says that's "the absolute minimum increase necessary to maintain health system stability" and anything less would undercut the government's goals to reduce wait times, and erode public confidence in the health-care system.

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NDP wants feds to extend EI entitlement length

A New Democrat MP is urging the federal government to extend employment insurance for workers who are running out of benefits. Yvon Godin says more than 500,000 workers have yet to find work, but are close to exhausting their EI entitlements. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Williams under fire for trip to U.S. hospital

Decision leads to debate on health-care system

Danny Williams's sky-high popularity ratings may have imbued him with the status of political demigod in Newfoundland, but the outspoken premier was nevertheless feeling the heat yesterday for his decision to seek heart surgery in the United States.

Having left a huge information vacuum in his wake — there was no word on his condition, the type of surgery he needs or where he is getting it — Williams is facing a level of scrutiny and criticism rarely seen since he became premier in 2003.

Danny Williams

Michael Temelini, a political science professor at Memorial University in St. John's, said it would be a mistake to assume Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are so enamoured with their premier that they are unwilling to put his actions under the microscope.

"People have been speaking out against it in the local press. It's been raising eyebrows," he said in an interview.

There has been plenty of barbs from local bloggers and people calling in to the province's immensely popular open-line radio shows.

"There are people who are willing to give him the benefit of the doubt … but I don't think it's unanimous," Temelini said.

Temelini said Williams's unusual move has also prompted much debate about the value and fairness of Canada's health-care system.

"Some people are openly wondering: 'What does it say about our own health-care system if you go somewhere else to get treated?' Some people are questioning the fact that he's pursuing an option that not all Newfoundlanders can pursue."

With so little information to go on, there was no shortage of comments floating in cyberspace to fill the void.

"Why he would raise questions about the quality of health care in Canada rather than issuing a simple statement to explain why he has chosen to pursue treatment in the U.S. is beyond me," said one of the more than 600 comments on the CBC website. "Mr. Williams has no right to privacy in this issue," said another message.

Health officials in Newfoundland confirmed yesterday that Williams's doctors had told him it would be best if he sought treatment outside the province, saying he needed to take advantage of the latest medical procedures. But some critics weren't buying that explanation.

"Guess this means the procedure was not available anywhere else in Canada either, huh? Not likely," a person calling themselves Jon wrote in a comment to the St. John's Telegram website.

"Instead he has the ability to use his cash to jump the line by going to the U.S., where there are shorter lines, rather than wait in line for the procedure in N.S., Ontario or Alberta like every other Newfoundlander would have to do."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Groundhog Day **Wiarton Willie sees his shadow**

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

South Bruce Peninsula mayor Gwenn Gilbert takes a closer look at Wiarton Willie in Wiarton, Ont., yesterday. The groundhog saw his shadow and predicted six more weeks of winter, agreeing with his furry counterparts.

m.metronews.ca

ScanLife

Danny Williams' choice to have surgery in the U.S. fans the flames of debate in that country. Scan this code for the story.

News in brief

SEALS A federal official says Canada's decision to hold the meeting of G7 finance ministers and central bankers in Iqaluit later this week is not intended to prove a point about the cultural and economic importance of seals in the North. The unusual location for the meeting, especially in the middle of winter, has raised some eyebrows and resulted in shortages in both accommodation and flight availability. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec defends emission standards

VEHICLES The Quebec government hit back at Ottawa yesterday after the federal environment minister called the province's new vehicular emission standards a "folly."

Quebec Environment Minister Line Beauchamp accused her federal counterpart, Jim Prentice, of parroting the auto industry's line against regulations limiting vehicle emissions.

"He's endorsing arguments advanced by automobile manufacturers, and that discourages me," she told The Canadian Press.

Last month Quebec adopted legislation that, starting in 2016, will impose fines up to $5,000 on large auto manufacturers for every vehicle they sell that fails to comply with new emission standards.

During a speech in Calgary on Monday, Prentice attacked the regulations for being out-of-step with economic realities.

"One of the most glaring examples of the folly of attempting to go it alone in an integrated North American economy is the new, and unique, vehicle regulations introduced by Quebec," he said.

"These ensure that consumers will basically have to leave that province to buy their vehicles, to avoid levies of up to $5,000, because 75 per cent of the latest car and truck models don't conform to the new rules."

But Beauchamp said the province is far from alone in adopting tough emission standards for vehicles, pointing out that 15 U.S. states, including New York and California, have already adopted similar regulations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Iggy takes Tories to task on abortion

DEBATE Michael Ignatieff has lobbed an abortion grenade into the midst of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's plans to become an international champion of women's and children's health.

The Liberal leader says Harper's commitment must include government aid for "the full gamut" of women's reproductive health services, including abortion and contraception.

Harper has vowed to use the G8 summit in Canada this June as a podium from which to launch a major initiative to improve the welfare of women and children around the globe.

But Liberals are worried the Tory government is backing away from Canada's long-standing tradition of supporting women's reproductive rights under its foreign-aid program. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Arrest made on military base in Barrie
Police have made an arrest after a van entered a military base near Barrie, Ont., and led officers on a chase inside and outside the base. THE CANADIAN PRESS

No more stimulus: Flaherty

Canada won't get a second round of financial stimulus even if the economy is weaker and unemployment worse than expected when Ottawa tables its recovery budget, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday.

The finance minister met with 15 economists yesterday morning and revised the country's projection for growth this year slightly upwards to 2.6 per cent from 2.3 per cent in September.

But since the recession has been much deeper than the January budget had projected, it still leaves the value of Canada's gross domestic product well below, and unemployment much higher, than assumed a year ago.

The government now believes the country's 2010 nominal GDP — the size of the economy — will be $56 billion below the level it expected last January, which directly impacts tax revenues. It now expects the unemployment rate to average 8.5 per cent this year, a full point higher than the January 2009 budget's estimate. Flaherty thought the situation so serious last January that he tabled an unprecedented $46 billion in stimulus spending and tax cuts in an effort to resuscitate the economy.

After meeting with the economists yesterday, the minister said the recovery is still fragile. But he stressed he won't change his plans to keep the stimulus flowing for one more year and then turn off the tap.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty takes his place at the start of a meeting with private sector economists in Ottawa yesterday.

*Subject to availability. ®: Used by Amex Bank of Canada under license from American Express.

Study linking autism to vaccines retracted

HEALTH A top British medical journal has retracted a discredited study that linked the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to autism and fuelled anti-vaccination sentiments in Europe and North America.

The Lancet, which published the controversial paper by Andrew Wakefield and colleagues in 1998, said yesterday it had become clear following a review of Wakefield's conduct by Britain's General Medical Council that several elements of the study were false.

Last week the council ruled that Wakefield had shown a "callous disregard" for the children used in his study and acted unethically.

The Lancet's move, viewed as long overdue by many infectious disease experts, was welcomed as a way of clearing discredited data from the scientific record.

But the legacy of the publication remains, several said upon hearing about the journal's announcement.

> **"... it's good the Lancet has retracted it. It helps in a small way. But the truth of the matter is the damage has been done."**
> Dr. Allison McGeer, Mount Sinai Hospital

"It was out there for a very long time. So it's good the Lancet has retracted it. It helps in a small way. But the truth of the matter is the damage has been done," Dr. Allison McGeer, an infectious diseases expert at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, said in an interview.

"So ... will it change the landscape of what's going on now? Not at all."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NGOs blast Tories for rights agency turmoil

DISPUTE Dozens of non-governmental organizations that work in the field of human rights have written an open letter denouncing actions by the Conservative-appointed board at Rights and Democracy.

The government-funded, arms-length agency has been in turmoil for months as factions on the board battled with staff and each other.

The dispute trigger appears to have been the agency's limited funding of two Palestinian NGOs that track human rights abuses, including those by Israeli military forces.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

DOGS The father of a 10-year-old boy who was killed by a pack of dogs on a northern Saskatchewan reserve says his son's death could have been prevented. Keith Iron died Saturday on the Canoe Lake First Nation. The boy's father, Clifford Iron, is critical of the community for doing little about the problem of stray dogs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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10:16 to top of Empire State Building

It took Germany's Thomas Dold 10 minutes 16 seconds yesterday to earn his record-tying fifth consecutive win in the Empire State Building Run-Up, a punishing 86-flight scamper to the top of New York's tallest building. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Taliban must renounce bin Laden: Saudis

The Saudi government said during a visit by Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday that it will not get involved in peacemaking in Afghanistan unless the Taliban stops providing shelter and severs all ties with Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida movement. Karzai, left, is visiting Saudi Arabia looking for support in his plan to persuade Taliban militants to switch sides. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Detroit **Cold reality**

PAUL SANCYA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this photo from last week, Gregory Holm sprays water on an abandoned Detroit house, encasing it in ice. Holm and another artist are hoping their effort helps draw attention to the housing crisis that has battered the U.S.

Officials: Time to end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

The U.S. military's policy barring homosexuals from openly serving in the armed forces was effectively put on a death watch yesterday following President Barack Obama's recent insistence that it's time to do away with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

Top military officials testified before a long-anticipated congressional hearing into the policy, saying they supported ending Don't Ask, Don't Tell while also stressing the need to move carefully with the U.S. immersed in two wars.

Defence Secretary Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the committee that the Defence Department will take most of the next year studying how best to lift the ban. Congress, however, will ultimately decide when and how the policy is rescinded.

As he opened the hearing, Carl Levin, the Democratic chairman of the Senate armed services committee, called it a discriminatory policy that only serves to weaken the U.S. military at a time when it desperately needs soldiers.

Adm. Mike Mullen

"Thousands of troops — 13,500 by one estimate — have been forced to leave the military under the current policy. Certainly that number includes many who could help the military complete its difficult and dangerous missions."

Levin mentioned Canada as one of the countries that has long allowed homosexuals to serve in the military without incident.

Republican Susan Collins, a senator from Maine, asked Mullen if the NATO allies in Afghanistan that allow homosexuals to serve had experienced any difficulties. Mullen replied that he had spoken to many NATO partners, and they reported "no impact" on military performance.

"No matter how I look at the issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens," Mullen said.

"Allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do."

Don't Ask, Don't Tell was a 1993 congressional compromise stipulating that those serving in the military not be asked about their sexual orientation. But by law, they can still be questioned and kicked out of the military for partaking in homosexual activity.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Militants warn of floating bombs

ISRAEL Palestinian militants said yesterday they had launched a large number of floating explosives toward the Israeli coast to avenge the death of a top Hamas commander, a day after two bomb-laden barrels washed up on Israel's coastline.

Israeli authorities launched an intensive search for new bombs, closing miles of beaches, deploying bomb squads and ordering surfers out of the water. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blamed Hamas and hinted at retaliation.

Abu Saed, a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, a Gaza faction with close ties to Hamas, said the attack was meant to avenge the killing of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a Hamas operative who Israeli officials say was involved in smuggling rockets into Gaza.

"We confirm that there are still many of these charges in the ocean, and they haven't exploded yet," Abu Saed said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

SAUDI ARABIA The mother of a 12-year-old girl who was married off to an 80-year-old man has unexpectedly dropped a court case to get her daughter divorced, Saudi media reported yesterday. The girl's mother had filed the case asking to "free" her daughter from the marriage. But she dropped the case after reconciling with her ex-husband, who had reportedly married off his daughter in exchange for a large dowry.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SCANLIFE

What presidential cuisine is on the menu when the Obamas invite celebrity chefs to the White House? Scan this code for the story.

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Spain offers to help protect children in Haiti

Spain says it will perform DNA tests on children in Haiti to try to reunite them with their parents and protect them from traffickers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tragedy behind tragedy

Child workers more prone to exploitation after quake

ELISABETH BRAW
Metro World News

Haiti Crisis

Manouchka remembers playing, but those are distant memories. For the past several years, the nine-year-old has spent every waking hour scrubbing laundry, washing dishes and fetching water.

The girl belongs to Haiti's infamous corps of "restaveks," young children whose parents have sent them away because they can't afford to keep them. (Restavek, from the French *reste avec*: Stays with.)

"Poor families send their children to stay with families who, most often, are no better off than their own" explains Jean Robert Cadet.

"The understanding is that these families will provide the children with food, shelter and education in exchange for domestic work. But the reality is that most of these children are in essence slaves."

Manouchka

Today, Haiti has an estimated 300,000 restaveks. Cadet, a former restavek, rescues such children though the Jean Cadet Restavek Foundation.

When the earthquake struck, the child slaves once again lost out. "They're the last ones to receive food, water and medical services," says Cadet.

"And since so many children have been orphaned by the earthquake, many are vulnerable to becoming restavek children."

According to UNICEF, some 1,000 children work as spies, messengers and soldiers for armed gangs in Port-au-Prince, and each year some 2,000 children are trafficked to the Dominican Republic.

"But most restaveks aren't trafficked by criminal gangs," notes Cadet. "The restavek system is a result of Haiti's poverty, poor infrastructure and lack of respect for children's rights."

Manouchka, who has never attended school, will soon join the 400 ex-restaveks in the Jean Cadet Foundation's educational program. But she still has very modest dreams.

"I'd like to leave my house to go to work," she tells Metro. "When I see people go to work, I wish I could do that, too."

Police repel food convoy hijacking

Haiti Crisis

UN Twenty armed men blocked a road and tried to hijack a convoy of food for earthquake victims, but were driven off by police gunfire, UN officials said yesterday as they warned of security problems in the still-desperate nation.

The attack on the convoy as it carried supplies from an airport in the southern town of Jeremie underscored the shaky safety in the streets that has added to Haitians' frustration at the slow pace of aid since the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Most quake victims are still living outside in squalid tents of sheets and sticks and aid officials acknowledge they have not yet gotten food to the majority of those in need.

Mobs have stolen food and looted goods from their neighbours in the camps, prompting many to band together or stay awake at night to prevent raids.

About 20 armed men blockaded a street Saturday and attacked a convoy carrying food from the airport in Jeremie, according to UN spokesman Vicenzo Pugliese. UN and Haitian officers fired warning gunshots and the men fled the scene, Pugliese said.

No injuries were reported and no one was hurt.

"The overall security situation across the country remains stable, but potentially volatile," the UN mission said in a statement yesterday.

In Jacmel, also a southern city, 33 escaped prisoners were apprehended Sunday, the UN said. Many prisoners escaped when prisons collapsed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. church group still being held

- Haiti's government was also dealing with the 10 Americans who tried to take a busload of undocumented Haitian children out of the country. The Idaho-based church group was being held without charges at a police station, where a judge met with it and a lawyer yesterday.

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Comment

Politicians sinking to new lows

TheWestView

How low can they go? Politicians, that is. Already among the least trusted professionals — a recent Reader's Digest poll ranked them 39 out of 41, barely above car salespeople and telemarketers — recent shenanigans should earn them coveted last place in next year's poll.

Even in an era of new lows represented by poster boy Rod Blagojevich, the former governor of Illinois, it has not been a great season for politicians.

The man elected to Ted Kennedy's U.S. senate seat is most famous for posing nude in Cosmo.

A New Brunswick MLA has gone viral on YouTube, caught rapping in the House to an American Idol contestant's "original song:" "Pants on the ground, pants on the ground, you're lookin' like a fool with your pants on the ground." Funny, sure, but it hardly elevates the level of legislative debate.

Someone tossed a politically correct pie in the face of Fisheries Minister Gail Shea for her stand on that annual outrage, the cute baby seal hunt, which is scheduled to start again shortly. Politically correct as no animal byproducts were harmed in the baking of the tofu cream pie. Poor Ms. Shea; it didn't even taste good.

And on Parliament Hill, home of that daily jackal fest known as question period, the prime minister arbitrarily prorogued the 40th Canadian Parliament until March 3. Just say no to democracy.

Of course, the way things are going, most of us see that as an improvement.

It's worse in England, where politicians scored an all-time low for public trust in a recent Ipsos Mori poll, making them the least trusted professionals in the nation, even lower than journalists, that other reviled sect.

It might have something to do with one MP claiming porn movies as a parliamentary expense or another hiring his teenage son, a full-time student, as a "parliamentary assistant" for more than £11,000 ($18,650). One even claimed £16.50 ($27.99) for a wreath allegedly draped on a war memorial.

As amusing as these hijinks may seem, there are serious consequences. Faced with this Confederation of Dunces, career aspirants are flocking to alternatives such as auto sales and telemarketing, or God forbid, journalism. Who's left to guide democracy? The kids of South Park?

And who will bother to vote for these jokers? Voter turnout in the last federal election was already at an all-time low.

It makes you long for the good old days of ... Brian Mulroney?

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting; vancouverletters@metronews.ca.

Word on the street: Should Canadian NHLers competing in the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver receive money if they win a medal, like amateur athletes do?

Liz Do
Toronto

A: No. They already get paid so much to begin with, and since they already have a lot of money and a lot of followers, they should have enough incentive to win a medal already.

Jean-Luc Quesnel
Toronto

A: I don't see why not. You earn what you deserve. Your profession shouldn't change what you deserve or don't deserve.

Kathleen Carlin
Toronto

A: My first thought is no, but they are volunteering their time to go to the Olympics ... If they didn't get the money, would that be spread amongst the amateur athletes?

Paul McAteer
Calgary

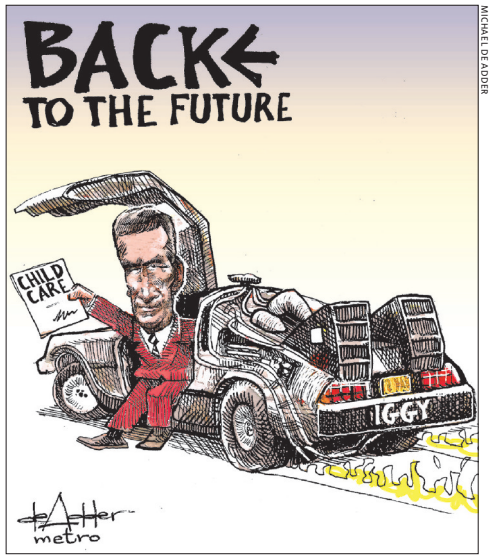
A: Yes, because there are also players who are not in the NHL playing Olympic hockey and they should be treated the same as other professional athletes.

Kelly Cousins
Halifax

A: No, I just don't think they need it. The money could go to amateurs who really need it to help build their career, help develop their skills more than people who already have all this money.

Peter Litherland
Vancouver

A: They are entitled to it, and they should get it, but it's up to the athlete to be a good corporate citizen and do something useful with it.



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Uni-Select completes company purchase
Auto parts distributor Uni-Select says it has completed the purchase of Georgia-based Automotive Information Management Inc., which specializes in direct distribution to auto parts shops. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Business in brief

DEBT Clearwater Seafoods Income Fund is asking the holders of some of its debt to extend a key repayment deadline as it grapples with rising costs and a difficult economic environment. The seafood harvester and processor said yesterday it wants to extend the redemption deadline for its debentures to 2013 from its current maturity date at the end of this year. The proposal will allow the company to preserve cash. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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ANDREW WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In this December file photo, the Wind Mobile HTC Maple phone is displayed at a company launch in Toronto. Globalive announced yesterday it will use private funds for its network expansion.

Carrier looks to private funding for expansion

Globalive Wireless Management Corp. has announced it plans to enter into a private debt financing arrangement with the help of Canadian and international investment banks.

Funds from the financing will be used to expand Wind Mobile, Globalive's new wireless communications network.

Globalive chairman and CEO Anthony Lacavera said yesterday under new securities rules he can't disclose the underwriters' names until the transaction closes in 60 to 90 days.

"This is a great opportunity for us to continue to build Canada's next, fourth national wireless carrier and roll out our business plan, add more distribution, add more network sites," Lacavera said.

The financing won't change ownership and control structure of Wind, he said.

"Globalive has engaged Canadian and international investment banks to assist in placing the debt financing," Globalive said in a statement.

Lacavera has said Globalive was in talks with Canadian, U.S. and international banks and was looking for "several hundred million dollars" in total.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Name change for DAVE

WIRELESS New mobile phone company DAVE Wireless has renamed itself as Mobilicity and says it will launch this spring in Toronto, with a rollout in other major cities later this year.

Chief executive officer Dave Dobbin said Mobilicity will offer a range of mobile devices from basic talk-and-text phones to smartphones with no contracts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SCANLIFE
While positive U.S. housing numbers buoyed stock markets, there's still plenty for investors to be wary of. Scan this code for the story.

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Recession torpedoes Fort Reliance's $30-million building project
Fort Reliance, the parent company for New Brunswick-based Irving Oil, says it will not move ahead with its planned $30-million world headquarters project in Saint John because of the recession. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ford, Hyundai gear up for boom

SALES Early Canadian sales results indicate economic conditions and demand for new vehicles continued to improve in the first month of 2010 — at least from some major automakers.

Hyundai Auto Canada reported its best January ever.

Hyundai says it sold more than 6,000 vehicles and beat last January's sales numbers by more than 32 per cent.

Last month was the 12th straight record month for the South Korean automaker, which saw a substantial gain in Canadian market share last year as it sold more than 100,000 vehicles in Canada for the first time ever.

Meanwhile, Ford Canada says its sales increased six per cent in January compared to a year earlier.

It marked the company's 15th straight month of market share gains.

Japanese automaker Honda didn't fare as well in January, with sales down 15 per cent year over year.

The rest of Canada's major automakers were expected to report their sales results imminently.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business in brief

CANDY Cadbury shareholders voted to approve Kraft Foods' $19.5-billion offer to acquire the British candy maker. The vote creates of the world's largest confectionary company. Meanwhile, hundreds of Cadbury workers protested the takeover in London. Protesters chanted "Keep Our Jobs." Some held banners that read "Don't Sell Us Out."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toyota quality control boss Shinichi Sasaki calls the recall a "huge problem for customers."

Toyota counts the cost

RECALL A consumer backlash is battering Toyota.

One of the automaker's top executives said yesterday the damage from the global recall of nearly 4.6 million vehicles may be greater than previous quality problems because of the massive scale.

"This is unprecedented in having caused this huge problem for customers," said Shinichi Sasaki, quality control boss at the world's No. 1 automaker.

He said it was too soon to put a number on the ultimate cost of the recall.

But Tatsuo Yoshida, an auto analyst at UBS in Tokyo, estimated the recalls caused by a gas pedal problem are likely to cost about $900 million. Lost sales are costing Toyota another $155 million per week, he said.

Toyota apologized to its customers Monday. Repairs will start in a matter of days, the company said.

Toyota said yesterday, the recall covers 4.45 million cars worldwide — 2.48 million in North America, 1.71 million in Europe, some 80,000 in China and 180,000 in other regions,

Dennis Dukes of Stony Point, N.C., and his wife, said they wouldn't drive their 2010 Camry again, even with the repair. "I am absolutely not going to drive that vehicle again," Dukes said. "Whether it fixes the Camry or not, the damage has been done. It is not going to fix things mentally for us."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I am absolutely not going to drive that vehicle again. Whether (Toyota) fixes the Camry or not, the damage has been done. It's not going to fix things mentally for us."
U.S. driver Dennis Dukes

Suncor posts a profit – but is it enough?

Analyst calls it a 'weak finish'

Suncor Energy Inc., Canada's biggest energy company, posted a $457-million profit in the final quarter of 2009.

The boost reverses a big loss in the prior-year period, but remains well below analysts' expectations.

Last year "was really about creating the new Suncor," chief executive officer Rick George said.

"And 2010 will be about realizing the benefits of that."

The oil and gas producer, refiner and fuel retailer — which merged with former Crown corporation Petro-Canada last August — said it earned 29 cents per share in the last three months of the year.

That compared to a net loss of $215 million, or 24 cents per share, for the fourth quarter of 2008.

The improvement came on higher crude oil prices in the quarter, Suncor said.

Suncor's future

- Suncor aims to grow its oilsands business by about 10 to 12 per cent per year through to 2020.
- It is on track to sell up to $2 billion in natural gas assets by the end of this year.

UBS Investment Research analyst Andrew Potter called the report a "weak finish to 2009," with Suncor's operating earnings per share at 20 cents, far below the brokerage's forecast of 40 cents.

"We attribute the variance from our forecast to a combination of factors including higher than forecast cash operating costs, capex (capital spending) and royalties," Potter said.

Suncor shares dropped 87 cents to $33.97 on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hershey savours sweeter figures

GAINS The Hershey Co. said yesterday higher prices helped boost its fourth-quarter profit and it will continue to look for potential acquisitions.

Higher prices and gains in efficiency partially offset higher costs for ingredients, marketing and other areas, Hershey said.

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Featuring replays, interviews and sports commentary at **metronews.ca/Sports**

Sports

Gesture costs coach $50K

Jets coach Rex Ryan has been fined $50,000 US by the team for making an obscene gesture at a mixed martial arts event last weekend. The team's decision yesterday comes after a smiling Ryan was caught gesturing by a cellphone camera at the competition in Sunrise, Fla., Saturday night. Ryan apologized the next day, calling his actions "stupid and inappropriate." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

NHL Following what head coach Brent Sutter termed as an "embarrassing" 3-0 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers Monday night, the Flames (27-21-8) made their second big trade in three days, sending forwards Olli Jokinen and Brandon Prust to the New York Rangers for Chris Higgins and fellow winger Ales Kotalik.
SOCCER Chelsea missed the chance to go four points clear at the top of the English Premier League with a 1-1 draw at Hull yesterday. The draw left Chelsea on 55 points, three clear of defending champion Manchester United.
CFL The Canadian Football Hall of Fame is set to welcome five new members. The class of 2010 includes Bob Cameron, Tracy Ham, Don Narcisse, Elfrid Payton and Joe Pistilli.
NHL Michael Cammalleri will be out for about six weeks with a knee injury but the good news for the Montreal Canadiens' top scorer is that he won't need surgery.
NFL New York Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez will have surgery on his left knee and is expected to be ready well before training camp.
CFL The Montreal Alouettes re-signed Canadian running back Dahrran Diedrick yesterday. The six-foot, 222-pound Diedrick, of Toronto, signed a two-year deal plus an option. He was scheduled to become a free agent later this month.
NBA The NBA players' association says it will not appeal Javaris Crittenton's suspension for having a gun in the Washington Wizards' locker room. Crittenton and teammate Gilbert Arenas were suspended for the season without pay last Wednesday.
CURLING Ontario's Krista McCarville moved to 5-1 with an 8-5 victory over Newfoundland and Labrador's Shelley Nichols as the Scotties Tournament of Hearts continued yesterday. METRO NEWS SERVICES

New Leafs make impact

NHL RESULTS

Devils 0 Leafs 3

VS

By the end of the first period of his first game, Dion Phaneuf had landed a hit, a fighting major and an ovation.

Had he managed anything more, fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs might well have elected him mayor, had they not already acclaimed his general manager for acquiring the big defenceman in a weekend trade.

Brian Burke's team had a good night yesterday, as Phaneuf and his new teammates rolled over the New Jersey Devils 3-0 to snap a six-game winless streak. The Leafs beat their Eastern Conference rivals thanks in large part to the energy provided by Phaneuf, new forward Fredrik Sjostrom and goaltender Jean-Sebastien Giguere.

Giguere finished with 30 saves, becoming only the second goaltender in team history to record a shutout in his debut. Ed Belfour was the first, beating the Pittsburgh Penguins 6-0 on Oct. 10, 2002.

Burke acquired Phaneuf and Sjostrom from the Calgary Flames Sunday, sending longtime Maple Leaf Matt Stajan to Alberta with forwards Niklas Hagman and Jamal Mayers and defenceman Ian White. Burke then landed Giguere from the Anaheim Ducks in exchange for underperforming winger Jason Blake and underwhelming goaltender Vesa Toskala.

"Obviously, it's really tough to see some of your good friends and teammates go," Maple Leafs forward Lee Stempniak said before the game. "I guess it's really a breath of fresh air. The new guys who came in, they're excited to be here."

More changes could be expected, with Burke having proclaimed the team was still open for business. There are a handful of moves that could be made, with speculation swirling around veteran forward Alexei Ponikarovsky, to name one.

"I'm not worried, it's just the business," Ponikarovsky said. "If you get traded, that's the way it is. I just want to play hockey and have fun." THE CANADIAN PRESS

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman Dion Phaneuf scraps with New Jersey Devils defenceman Colin White last night at the Air Canada Centre. The Leafs won 3-0.

m.metronews.ca

Scan this barcode for summaries of last night's NHL games.

Pacers snap Raptors' five-game win streak

Danny Granger scored 23 points and the Indiana Pacers snapped the Toronto Raptors' five-game winning streak with a 130-115 victory last night.

Troy Murphy had 20 points and 14 rebounds for Indiana, which ended a three-game skid. Roy Hibbert had 18 points and nine boards, and Earl Watson added 15 points and a season-high 11 assists.

Lester Conner coached the Pacers in place of Jim O'Brien, who attended a family funeral.

Chris Bosh had 35 points and 15 rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani scored a career-high 34 points for the Raptors.

It was a season scoring high for the Pacers, who had scored fewer than 100 points in six of their previous nine games. They lost 117-102 in Toronto Sunday.

Indiana made 33 of 35 free throws and shot 52 per cent from the field. It was just the fifth time the Pacers shot better than 50 per cent this season.

Indiana led 58-53 at halftime and opened the second half with an 18-8 surge, capped by Murphy's 3-pointer. Brandon Rush's 3 extended Indiana's lead to 20 points five minutes into the third quarter. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Toronto 3 New Jersey 0
Washington 4 Boston 1
Tampa Bay 2 Atlanta 1
Montreal 3 Vancouver 2
Phoenix at Nashville
Minnesota at Dallas
Columbus at Colorado
N.Y. Rangers at Los Angeles
Detroit at San Jose

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Indiana 130 Toronto 115
Cleveland 105 Memphis 89
Orlando 99 Milwaukee 82
Detroit 97 New Jersey 93
L.A. Clippers at Chicago
Atlanta at Oklahoma City
Golden State at Houston

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NAME	LOCATION	GP	G	A	PTS
1. Brian B	AB, CA	788	334	463	797
2. Jonathon Gremsperger	BC, CA	790	334	456	790
3. Shawn Tschritter	AB, CA	787	315	464	779
4. Christian Gagnon	NB, CA	748	313	460	773
4. Kyle Turk	NS, CA	796	332	441	773
6. Cole Warren	NS, CA	776	288	478	766
7. Joanne Doiron	NB, CA	744	305	459	764
7. Stephanie Warren	NS, CA	766	320	444	764
9. Jean-Paul Osborne	QC, CA	783	306	456	762
10. Shane Gladue	AB, CA	777	280	477	757
11. Feroz Mir	ON, CA	769	299	457	756
12. Bernie Horton	ON, CA	734	313	442	755
13. Tom Collier	NS, CA	801	346	408	754
14. Jordan Camponi	AB, CA	749	297	455	752
15. Steve Ferguson	ON, CA	779	312	439	751

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Johnson heads West
Former Blue Jay Reed Johnson has agreed to a one-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leafs not done

With depth at defence, Burke may still flip Kaberle

TheHockeyNews

The Hockey News
thn.com

After the massive Sunday of trading that Maple Leafs GM Brian Burke just engaged in, I'm glad I wrote a 'Who-the-Leafs-ought-to-deal column' last week and not this week.

Burke's one-stop-swap-shop was back in business, if only for one day.

And it processed two big transactions that brought former Flames defenceman Dion Phaneuf and ex-Ducks goalie J.S. Giguere to Toronto, and sent Matt Stajan, Niklas Hagman, Ian White and Jamal Mayers to Calgary, and Jason Blake and Vesa Toskala to Anaheim.

If that felt like long-anticipated fun for joy-starved Toronto fans, it should have; they have been awaiting a world-class housecleaning from Burke since he arrived from the Ducks organization about a year ago — and, clearly, he was pleased to finally deliver.

But more trades are coming.

And at the risk of repeating a theme I've developed this year, I believe I know the player Burke will have to deal.

My guess: Tomas Kaberle, the elite blue-liner — and last of the infamous Muskoka Five group of star Leafs — who has been the focus of trade rumours for the last couple years, will be the one on the swapping block.

Everybody knows Toronto is desperate to acquire talented forwards — and the only way that happens is if it trades some of the depth Burke's latest moves have given the Leafs' defence corps.

Safe to say he won't be trading Phaneuf, or the two D-men (Francois Beauchemin and Mike Komisarek) he signed last summer.

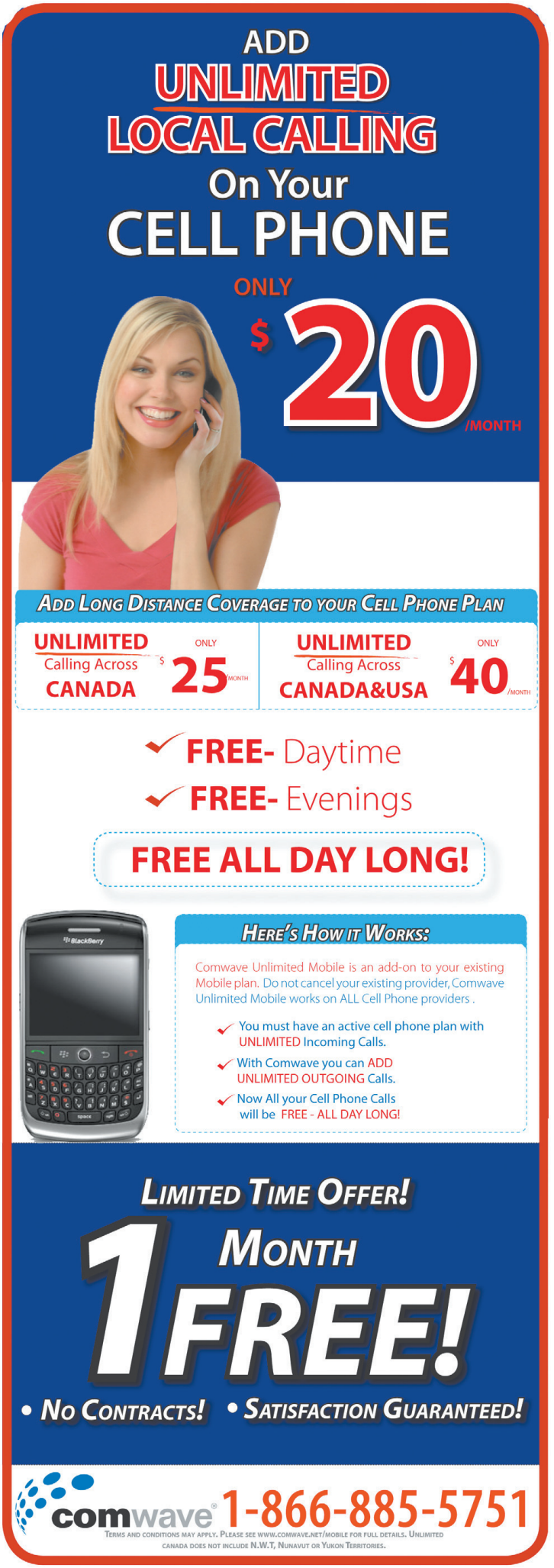
That leaves Kaberle, and Kaberle alone, as the most valuable trade bait Burke has in his arsenal.

Burke previously shot down rumours of a Kaberle deal by saying if he did send the quiet Czech to another team, he'd have to search for another player to replace Kaberle's puck-moving skills.

In Phaneuf, he now has just such a replacement.

Kaberle can cling to his no-trade clause all he likes — or until summer, when Toronto almost certainly will have a window in which the clause disappears — but he must know the end of his Leafs career is at hand.

Tomas Kaberle



Murray plans to compete
Canadian freestyle skier Julia Murray underwent arthroscopic surgery yesterday and says she plans to race in the ski cross event at the Winter Olympics. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver Games

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

Christine Nesbitt skates during the ISU World Cup Speedskating Championships Dec. 11 in Kearns, Utah.

Long track, high hopes

With nine medals predicted, speedskaters key to Canada's plans

For years long-track speedskating was ruled by Europeans and Americans, home to the kind of talent most Canadian competitors had little hope of bumping from the podium.

Occasionally, a Gaetan Boucher or Susan Auch would emerge and break through to interrupt that domination. Only such success was fleeting, and never really spread deeper than an athlete or two.

That started changing at the turn of the century, and with the blades set to hit the Richmond Olympic Oval ice at the Vancouver Games, there is a new pecking order in the speedskating world.

Led by the likes of Kristina Groves and Christine Nesbitt, Canada boasts a deep and talented long-track team that may very well claim more medals than any other at these Olympics.

The Dutch, Americans, Germans and Norwegians, among others, have not gone away by any means. But they now see the Canadians the way Canadians once saw them — as a giant obstacle to victory.

"I was really inspired by Clara (Hughes) and Cindy (Klassen) when they came into the team and pretty quickly were right up there. I was like, 'Wow, we can compete against the Dutch and the Germans, we're in there,'" said Groves, who will race in five events and has the potential to win a medal in each.

On the web
Learn more about Christine Nesbitt in an interactive profile at **metronews.ca**

"Now, I'm so thankful to be part of this ridiculously strong team."

Team is the optimal word.

Canadians won eight medals at the Turin Games but five came from Cindy Klassen's awe-inspiring performance.

This time around, Groves, Nesbitt and Denny Morrison each have the potential to win multiple medals, with a host of other contenders sprinkled in around them.

Privately, Speed Skating Canada officials feel their athletes can climb the podium nine times, and that's not counting on Klassen or Jeremy Wotherspoon, both of whom are wild cards after working their way back from injuries.

That depth of talent has kept the pressure from being focused on one single skater. That has been important since team members have regularly been reminded that they must own the oval for Canada to have any chance of owning the podium at these Olympics.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rates Rise Again

Ontario Regulators Approve More Increases To Car Insurance Rates

Are Rates REALLY Going Up Again?

Unfortunately, the answer is yes. The most recent round of rate increases approved by Ontario regulators has confirmed everyone's worst fears. Car insurance rates are continuing on their one-way trip upwards despite news late last year that the government will soon be introducing reforms to give consumers more choice and flexibility. The most recent increases for the fourth quarter of 2009 bring the average increase across Ontario insurers over the last 12 months to 8.8%. Depending on the insurance company you are with and your situation, you might be on the road to seeing double-digit increases.

Is There Any Hope Of Paying LESS For Car Insurance?

Absolutely. Rates may be on the rise, but the size of the increases can vary significantly from one company to the next and from driver to driver, so don't be fooled by the headlines which suggest we're all doomed to pay more for car insurance. The truth is that rates charged by different insurance companies to insure the same driver, with the same car, for the same coverage, can vary by hundreds and even thousands of dollars. Take a look at the table below.

The key to finding the best rate is to figure out which insurance company has the best rate for your particular situation. And with rates varying so wildly across companies, chances are you are not with the company that has the lowest rate for your profile right now. This is where InsuranceHotline.com can help by instantly providing quotes from over 30 insurance companies to find you the lowest rate available – and the service is absolutely FREE to use.

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By contrast, most websites offering to "compare insurance quotes" are owned by or affiliated with insurance brokers or agents and are therefore only capable of quoting rates from the limited number of insurance companies they represent, typically no more than 4 or 5.

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Rate Comparison

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1 Accident	$1,849	$3,753	$1,904

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RRSP Guide

Don't forget

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SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Go back to basics

Advisers advocating using tried and tested strategies

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

The tough economy drew many Canadians away from their RRSP strategies, but now is the time to come back, experts say.

Aaron Margolis, a vice-president at Investors Group, says last year's market scramble has mostly stabilized and the time is ripe for smart, careful investing.

"Certainly the market conditions this year are very different. Last year there was so much fear and panic, this year there's much more calmness. There's a sense that people need to get back into the market, but in a prudent way," Margolis said.

"There's a sense that people need to get back into the market, but in a prudent way." Aaron Margolis, Investors Group

Rather than looking for quick fixes, get back to tried and tested strategies like RRSPs and income-generating investments.

"It's about getting back to the basics. Advisers are saying what has worked in the past should put you in good standing in the future — it might be a little more boring but it works. It's almost like the old adage: What's old is new," Margolis said.

While the Tax-Free Savings Account introduced last year has proven popular, Margolis says you should prioritize your RRSP contribution first because of the tax savings it can provide.

"The TFSA is a terrific vehicle for creating emergency savings, but try as much as possible to max out your RRSP first to benefit from tax efficiencies inherent in it, then consider maximizing your TFSA contribution," Margolis said.

Look for investments that grant an income and try as best as possible to invest with your risk tolerance in mind, he suggests.

Lee Anne Davies, head of retirement strategies at RBC, says an RRSP should be a long-term priority for any Canadian, yet in a recent RBC RRSP poll, only 35 per cent of Canadians with RRSPs said they plan to contribute to their RRSP for the 2009 tax year, with 54 per cent citing the tough economy as the reason.

Perhaps more surprising, the poll also found that 32 per cent of Canadians have not started saving for their retirement, an unfortunate scenario in the making, Davies says.

"We're all going to retire eventually, and you want to make sure you have that nest egg waiting for you," Davies said.

For people feeling like they can't spare enough to save for retirement, Davies says putting away even a relatively small amount, like $25 or $30 each month, can make a big difference in the long run.

"Stay committed to your retirement and it will happen one day. If you just keep saving a bit at a time, it really does add up," Davies said.

The market is ripe for smart, careful investing, experts say.

Next week's lineup

HOW TO SAVE For advice from the experts on strategies for saving, pick up Metro's next RRSP Guide on Feb. 10.

Diverse portfolio can protect against ups, downs of market

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

There are different options for handling your RRSP investments and experts advise a diverse portfolio to protect against the shocks of the marketplace.

"You don't want to keep all of your eggs in one basket," says Allison Marshall, financial advisory consultant with the Royal Bank of Canada. "You want to divide your assets in your RRSP between the different types of investments and also look at some foreign content."

Marshall points to three main options: Cash, bonds and equity. You don't want to have a lot of cash in your RRSP as it defeats the purpose of wanting to earn a rate of return. Treasury bills or money market investments and Canada or provincial savings bonds are "some examples of more liquid investments," she says.

Bonds may also include GICs (Guaranteed Investment Certificates). "You can have any bonds that are issued by companies that are listed on a public exchange in Canada or ... debt that was issued by a company that's on what Canada calls a designated stock exchange," she explains.

That includes U.S., U.K. and Japanese exchanges. A full list can be found at fin.gc.ca.

For equities, you can have any of those common shares and preferred shares on those designated exchanges.

While many people just trust the issuer of the RRSPs to handle the account, a more hands-on investor may want a self-directed RRSP for a wider investment range. Information on those can be found at cra-arc.gc.ca.

In Calgary, Sun Life Financial's Lance Shilliday breaks it down to GICs, mutual funds and segregated funds.

GICs are interest-rate bearing, meaning you can lock in a guaranteed interest rate for one to five years. Mutual funds range from money market to equity funds and segregated funds "are basically the same type of funds as a mutual fund, but they have guarantees associated with them, like a death-benefit and maturity-benefit guarantee," he says.

A new feature is a guaranteed minimum withdrawal benefit. "That basically guarantees you an income for life. It alleviates a lot of the risks involved with retirement," he says.

What does it mean?

- **RRSP:** Registered Retired Savings Plan. They are registered with the federal government and shelter investments from income tax until the money is withdrawn.
- **LIRA:** Because pensions from former employers can't be converted into cash, an option is a Locked-in Retirement Account.
- **RRIF:** Your RRSP must be collapsed by the end of the year in which you turn 71, but you can keep most of the advantages by converting to a Registered Retirement Income Fund.
- **LIF:** Like an RRIF, a Life Income Fund originates from a pension plan, locked-in RRSP or LIRA.

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How to grow your savings

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

The number one reason people invest in an RRSP is to save for their retirement, says Kevin Cork, a certified financial planner.

It's RRSP season again and time to think about how to maximize your contributions.

So what's the best way to go about it?

Kevin Cork, a certified financial planner based in Calgary, says in a financial planner's dream world, everyone would line up on Jan. 1 and make their contribution for that year, then march off, happy as clams.

But the reality is that not everyone is able to max out their contributions every year, so the next best option is to contribute as much as you can.

"The number one reason to do the RRSP is the concept of building for retirement," he said. "The way our social system is set up in Canada — and it's one of the best in the world — it doesn't provide anything even close to a reasonable retirement income for people."

Whatever amount you contribute, make sure your money is invested wisely, he said.

"There are lots of stories about people who have plopped their money in an RRSP every year and then come retirement, they've found they've been putting their money into a daily interest account for the last 40 years and have almost no money to do anything with," he said.

If you know nothing about finances and don't want to spend more than five minutes a year thinking about your RRSPs, go for the "plain, vanilla, dull, balanced mutual fund," he said.

As you become more comfortable with investing, try to develop an investment portfolio so your money has a chance to grow, he said.

When considering how much to contribute every year, Alim Dhanji, a certified financial planner with Assante Financial Management Ltd. in Vancouver, says it should be based on life goals.

"For beginners, they should seek guidance before making their contribution from a qualified professional such a CFP (certified financial planner)," he said.

For young people, having a financial plan is important because it helps prioritize goals such as student loan payments, saving for a home or saving for retirement.

Contributing to an RRSP helps develop good saving habits while at the same time preparing you for retirement. Dhanji recommends setting up a monthly RRSP contribution.

Tax-Free Saving Account vs. an RRSP

Jamie Golombek, managing director of tax and estate planning for CIBC, says that for people with lower incomes and in a lower tax bracket, it may make more sense to contribute to a Tax-Free Savings Account instead of an RRSP.

"They could find that, upon retirement, they're actually in a higher tax bracket than they are right now," he said.

In that case, their money will be taxed at a higher rate when it's withdrawn, upon retirement, than the rate the tax was deducted at when they contributed.

"For many Canadians, maximizing the TFSA should take priority over RRSPs," he said.

Hold back with my RSP?

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Don't rush, expert says

Canadians have until March 1 to make their 2009 contributions to their registered retirement savings plans, and it looks like fewer will be taking advantage of the plan this year.

A survey done by Royal Bank late in 2009 indicated that just 35 per cent of Canadians have contributed to or plan to contribute to an RRSP for the 2009 tax year — the lowest percentage of contributors since 1996.

Canada was still recovering from a recession at that time, just like now, and economists note that that could be one reason for the difference in intentions this year.

Higher household debt levels could also be making many nervous about contributing.

For those Canadians who are contributing, many will likely wait until close to the deadline and that can be problematic, because the last thing you want to do is put more of your hard-earned money into any sort of investment in a hurry.

If you must make your contribution close to the last minute, leave the money in cash for a few weeks before making a final decision.

"Just a holding pattern for three months — whatever it takes to look at your game plan and say, where am I going," said Adrian Mastracci, portfolio manager at KCM Wealth Management in Vancouver.

"If it takes you 90 days to figure that out, it's not going to be until the end of the world. Because what you're going to miss in 90 days is really peanuts."

By cash, that means the money can be put into a regular savings account that is registered, or into a Guaranteed Investment Certificate or a money market fund.

A big reason why an investor wants to think twice about where to put money this year is that the Toronto stock market's performance is expected to be very different from last year. During 2009, the main Toronto index ran up 31 per cent.

But a repeat of that showing is highly unlikely, with many analysts predicting a gain this year, though it will be much more of a grind.

Another good reason for not just plopping your money in any mutual fund at the end of February is that many financial advisers are very busy just then and it could be harder for you to discuss what you should do with your money.

Again, better to wait until a few weeks after the deadline. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Automate your deposits
Set up a savings plan where you make automatic, regular investments into your RRSP. The price of investments, such as a mutual fund, can fluctuate with the markets, so regular contributions can help lower the average cost. NEWS CANADA

Are you a risk-taker?

Take this quiz to help determine how much uncertainty you can handle

KIRA VERMOND
for Metro Canada

You're ready to start investing your money and rake in capital gains, but where should you plant your cash?

That depends on your level of risk tolerance, how much uncertainty your portfolio — and your emotions — can take when markets climb and fall.

Risk tolerance varies according to age, income level, financial goals and personality, so it pays to take a look at your situation before making the leap. Here are nine questions to get you thinking:

1 How old are you?
- **Under 30**
- **30-40**
- **41-50**
- **51-64**
- **65 and over**

This is the first question most financial planners will look at when determining risk tolerance. Here's the thinking: The younger you are, the more risks you can take with your money because you still have ample time to turn things around before retirement.

2 How much money do you make?
- **Under $25,000**
- **Between $25,000 and $50,000**
- **Between $51,000 and $100,000**
- **More than $100,000**

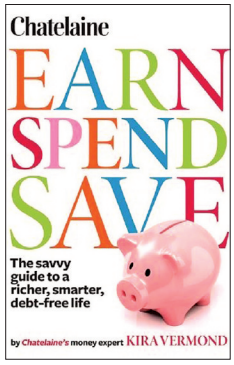
The higher the income, the more risk tolerance the person has. After all, if someone worth $6 million loses half her income in the markets, she's still sitting on a cool $3 million. But someone who lives paycheque to paycheque could wind up wiping out next month's rent on a bad deal.

3 How would you feel if your investments went into a death-spiral?
- **Completely on edge**
- **Like a failure**
- **Worried, but know I can handle the challenge**
- **Cool and calm.**

Investments are supposed to hit rough patches. Now is a good time to buy low so I can sell high later. Not everyone is a glass-half-full type. It's important to know what kind of personality you have so you can decide beforehand how you're going to handle investment setbacks. Those who are uncomfortable with risk are more likely to sell before the markets recover.

4 What kind of mortgage do you have?
- **Fixed.** I like to know exactly what I'll be paying each month.
- **Variable.** Emotionally, I can handle ups and downs because I'm saving money. I also have enough extra money in my account to deal with interest hikes when they happen.

There's no shame in being risk-averse. But if you're too afraid to take any risks and you actually have the means to do so, you're missing out on great financial opportunities.



If you're new to investing, educate yourself by reading financial books, such as Kira Vermond's Earn, Spend, Save.

Not all money is invested for retirement, but for other purchases. The longer time horizon you have, the more likely you can buy hot, but dicey, stocks instead of opting for a GIC or other low-risk investment.

5 How much household debt do you have?
- **So much I don't even look at my credit card statements anymore**
- **A good portion of my income goes to paying off debt each month**
- **I pay my debts in full each month**
- **I am debt-free**

The amount of debt should influence how much risk you take on when investing. In fact, out-of-control debt needs to be taken care of first before playing the stock market. Why? Even if your RRSP made 11 per cent interest last year, if you forked over 19 per cent for debt, you still actually lost money overall.

6 Who are you responsible for?
- **Me, myself and I**
- **Older parents**
- **My spouse**
- **My spouse and children**
- **My children, no spouse**

Of course you can gamble your money and still sleep at night if no one else will be affected but you. But once other dependents are in the picture, those risky moves may not be worth making.

7 When will you need the money?
- **Within six months**
- **In one to five years**
- **In five to 10 years**
- **More than 10 years from now**

8 What is the money needed for?
- **Retirement**
- **A down-payment for a house**
- **My child's education**
- **An emergency fund**
- **A convertible**

In some ways, this is the most important question. Do you feel comfortable taking risks with your daughter's university RESP money? Are you willing to spend a few more years saving for a down-payment if that hot stock you invested in to make money fast tanks? Know what you're saving for before making your move.

9 How much investing experience do you have?
- **I'm completely new to investing and trading**
- **I've been trading for a few years and understand mutual funds, but would like to branch into a new area**
- **I'm an experienced investor who keeps tabs on the markets each day**

Get some education and experience under your belt before investing your money or trying something new. If you're a complete newbie when it comes to investing, educate yourself by reading financial books, magazines and newspaper sections, watching personal finance TV shows or perusing money websites. Or find a financial adviser you trust to lead the way.

Kira Vermond is Chatelaine's money columnist and the author of Earn, Spend, Save (Wiley, 2010).

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Nearly $14 million for research projects in N.L.
The federal government announced Sunday $13.8 million under the Atlantic Innovation Fund for seven R&D projects in Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial University will receive a total of $9.6 million for five projects. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Program ups Indian enrolment

A new program between Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges is being credited for doubling the acceptance rate of Indian students coming to study at a select group of Canadian colleges. Launched in April, the Student Partners Program aims to increase the approval rate of study permit applications at 20 participating colleges. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

40 people, 40 tastes, 40 dishes

Working the Wok

For the month of February, Metro's Workology section will be focusing on some delicious food-related careers. Check back every Wednesday for a new feature.

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

While being a chef can offer you unbridled creativity in the kitchen, it can also be an incredibly busy job.

The best part of cooking for a living is the thrill of a busy kitchen and a restaurant full of customers. It's also the worst part, if you're at the end of a 108-hour week.

Jimmy Dao, chef at the popular Talay Thai restaurant in downtown Halifax, cranks out 18-hour days six days a week in peak times, but if he wants to complain to the boss, he has to find a mirror: He owns the business with his family.

"It's very stressful and very busy. Never ending," he says. "When it's busy, it's a good sign and you're happy, but tired. You feel excited when everything is moving around — it's like exercise."

Dao trained on the job, working in restaurants in Moncton, Montreal and Toronto before opening Talay Thai five years ago. The long and unsociable hours mean he doesn't see his two-year-old son as much as he'd like, but it's the price he pays for doing a job he loves.

"I hope I can continue another 20 years," he says.

John Higgins, director of the Chef School at George Brown College in Toronto, agrees that killer hours are one of the big downsides to cooking for a living.

"Cooking is a tough job. You're on your feet all day, there's pressures, deadlines, customers," he says. "You get 40 customers and you've got 40 different taste palates and you're only as good as your last meal."

The good news is the industry is expanding, meaning jobs at not just hotels and restaurants, but also golf courses, casinos, catering firms and venues like the Air Canada Centre. Companies like Unilever also hire chefs, offering the elusive nine-to-five cooking job.

George Brown College offers a one-year chef training certificate or a two-year culinary management diploma. Year one covers the basic skills needed to work in the food-service industry, like hygiene, tool use and cooking styles. Year two takes those skills deeper. The training is half hands-on, half theory. Theory covers the science of cooking. A lamb chop, for example, can be cooked with radiated heat on a grill, but ox tail has to be cooked much longer because the connective tissue of the collagen takes a few hours to break down.

The hands-on side lets the budding chefs loose in the school's 14 state-of-the-art kitchens, where recipes take a back seat to skills.

For more of the Working the Wok exclusive series check Workology every Wednesday or stop by: **metronews.ca/work**

Co-workers are bad for career advice: Study

BEING (ILL) ADVISED Thinking about tapping your colleagues for advice on how to get ahead? You may want to reconsider, a new survey by The Creative Group suggests. Nearly six in 10 advertising and marketing executives said they have received bad career advice from coworkers. Another 54 per cent have been steered in the wrong direction by their bosses.

Survey respondents also were asked to describe the worst career advice they have ever received. Some examples follow:

Play it safe?

- "I was advised to keep quiet when there were problems."
- "They told me to stick with what I know, but all growth is the result of developing and learning, especially in this economy."
- "I was told to look for safe opportunities rather than striving for challenges."
- "They told me I was as high as I was going to go in this organization and should stay put."

Overly risky?

- "I had someone tell me to walk into the CEO's office and say, 'We need to talk about my salary today.'"
- "Someone told me to jump into a start-up company, and six months later the firm went out of business."

Benefits whom?

- "My former boss discouraged me from going to work for a competitor, saying that I wouldn't last, but I did. I later found out that he had made a wager that I wouldn't join that firm, and that was why he discouraged me to work there."
- "A coworker wanted me to take her job so she could take a new position. It wasn't a good idea. I wasn't ready to fill that job."

"Sole-searching"

- "I once had an employer say he didn't like my shoes, and I would never go anywhere without the right footwear. I stuck with my shoes, which were professional, and his advice turned out to be bogus. I have been successful in this industry for 35 years."

"As with any advice, it's wise to consider the source," said Donna Farrugia, of The Creative Group. "Although many managers and coworkers have your best interests at heart, the fact that your professional actions may affect them may color their judgment." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Different advice

- Find the voice of experience. When seeking guidance, get perspective from someone who has faced a similar situation.
- Let your ambitions be your guide. The people closest to you have different perspectives about what's important in your life.
- Help them help you. Even those who aren't personally invested in your success may find it hard to provide counsel if they don't know your career goals.

THE CREATIVE GROUP

Manitoba dentists approve fee to support uManitoba dental school
Dentists attending the Manitoba Dental Association's annual meeting last Thursday approved a one-time $500 fee to keep the University of Manitoba's outreach dental clinics open this year. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sometimes humour at work is necessary

Dragons' Den
Dianne Buckner
metronews.ca/dragonsden

CBC PHOTO
Kevin O'Leary with his Dragon doll from Happy Nappy Diaper Service.

Humour in the workplace — there are big benefits to having a laugh at work, but joking around can also be risky.

We all love to have some fun in our working lives. And there are often opportunities to make light of challenges and crack a good joke, especially when team members share triumphs and failures on a daily basis.

And there's no question that one of the reasons Dragons' Den is so popular, is that every Dragon has a well-developed sense of humour. A couple of weeks ago Kevin told two young girls pitching for investment that he can only tell the truth about bad business ideas, because he was once hit by a lightning bolt.

"Is that what happened to your hair?" asked Robert.

"Maybe that's why you're not tall," zinged Brett.

And this week a woman pitches for investment in her baby-related business by giving every Dragon a doll to hold.

"Give me your baby," Arlene says to Kevin. "I want to spank it."

They like to have fun in their workplace — and who doesn't?

But humour can also be risky. Obviously jokes about race or sex or religion are unwelcome, and sometimes even an innocent joke can go wrong.

"There are often opportunities to make light of challenges and crack a good joke, especially when team members share triumphs and failures on a daily basis."

As a teenager I worked at The Bay. For some reason, if one of my co-workers returned from a break and asked if anyone had called, I would say "Yes, the boss phoned. You're fired."

I know — it's not funny — but what can I say? I was a goofy 17 year old! Luckily they knew it, and usually at least smiled at my kidding around.

But one time, a salesman I'll call Bill returned from lunch and asked if there were any calls. Pretending to be reading from a message on the desk, I made my usual crack. "Yeah the boss says to tell you you're fired".

Bill's face fell — he looked like he'd seen a ghost. "I'm kidding, I'm kidding!" I blurted, apologizing as fast as I could. Bill was relieved, but definitely seemed shaken as he returned to the sales floor.

The next week I heard that Bill had been fired. I realized that he'd probably been told he was on probation, and my stupid "joke" sounded very real to him. Needless to say, I felt awful.

And it taught me a lesson. I still love to be playful and good-humoured at work, but I am careful to do so in good taste.

Dianne Buckner is the host of Dragons' Den and the weekend anchor on the CBC News Network. Watch Dragons' Den at 8 p.m. tonight on CBC.

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"Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes" – OSCAR WILDE

PHOTO CREDIT
Can employers discard employees on long-term disability?

Seldom will a temporary illness justify dismissal. But what happens when a sick employee may never return? Can employers discard employees they view as festering on their disability insurance or must they keep their jobs available for an indefinite period of time? According to a recent Alberta case, employers must tread carefully with injured employees or pay the price of their severance.

When Sandra Lippa received a package in the mail containing her record of employment signed by her replacement and her outstanding vacation pay, she assumed she had been fired. Lippa had left work five months' earlier due to an illness and it was not clear when she would return.

Lippa's employer, Can-Cell Industries, disagreed. Lippa hadn't qualified for short or long-term disability insurance, and in the meantime it had no choice but to replace her in her position. Can-Cell wrote to Lippa requesting medical confirmation that her illness prevented her from working and gave her a deadline to respond. When Lippa questioned the sincerity of Can-Cell's position, she was fired for cause.

The company argued that Lippa had abandoned her employment by refusing to return and that her employment was frustrated so it did not owe her any severance.

The legal principle of frustration of contract means that what you have initially bargained for no longer exists. In workplace law, the issue often arises when employees are absent for an indefinite period of time, without any reasonable likelihood of returning. If an employment contract is frustrated, then the employer has the right to walk away from the employee, without paying any severance.

Recently, an Alberta court considered Can-Cell's arguments and rejected its assertions that Lippa had done anything wrong or that her employment had been frustrated.

According to the judge, Can-Cell had treated Lippa's health problems as being "fortuitous." By arguing that Lippa had abandoned her job, Can-Cell was simply seeking to avoid paying her severance.

It was always Lippa's intention to return, and Can-Cell had acted disingenuously by requesting medical evidence after already signalling its intention to fire her.

Canadian employers are not permitted to discard employees whose prospects for recovering from an illness appear dim.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer with Whitten & Lublin LLP. Reach him at dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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Leaf wins award
The Nissan Leaf electric car has been named Green Car Journal's 2010 Green Car Vision Award winner at The Washington Auto Show. The innovative Leaf is scheduled to go on sale later this year. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Metro Drive

Michelin plugs in
Michelin has unveiled a new prototype tire designed specifically for battery-powered electric vehicles, providing automakers with benefits including increased range or the ability to reduce the battery size to optimize interior space. CANADIANDRIVER.COM

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Sorento joins CUV crowd

New platform behind improved handling, quiet ride

MICHAEL GOETZ
for Metro Canada

The 2011 Kia Sorento is built on the same platform that underpins the Hyundai Santa Fe crossover and the Sonata sedan.

Crossovers rule and SUVs drool.

That's not quite how the analysts describe the ongoing shift from truck-based SUVs to car-based crossovers, but close.

As such, we're used to seeing CUVs (crossover utility vehicles) torment their SUV classmates in the sales-chart playground. But now we're even seeing iconic SUV nameplates "crossing over."

The highest profile defector is the upcoming all-new Ford Explorer, which joins the CUV crowd after spending all its life up until now as a truck. But beating it to the punch is the 2011 Kia Sorento.

The nameplate was first introduced in 2002 as a straight-up SUV. Now that Kia is owned by Hyundai, and now that old-school SUVs are, well, old school, the Sorento has migrated over to the platform that also underpins the Hyundai Santa Fe crossover and the Sonata sedan.

So if you're familiar with the 2010 Santa Fe, you'll be relatively up to speed on the 2011 Sorento.

Judging by our first fling with the Sorento on the highways and by-ways around West Point, Ga., where the Sorento is being built at Kia's first U.S. plant, it's a tough call on which Sorento you should get — both the entry-level four-cylinder vehicle and the higher-rent six-cylinder vehicles have something to say.

The base model (LX) with 175-hp 2.4 litre I4, manual transmission and FWD is just $23,995. At that price it competes with the "smaller half" of the compact segment, but it offers up the interior volume (4,035 L) of the "larger half."

Note also that all Canadian models come standard with these all-weather tools: heated seats, A/C, windshield wiper de-icer, and power heated outside mirrors. All trim lines also feature six air bags, ABS, ESC, Electronic Brake Distribution, Hill Start Assist Control, and Downhill Brake Control.

The V6 is exclusively mated to automatics, starting at $29,095. The EX range begins with the FWD V6 at $31,795, and tops out with the seven-seat AWD Luxury trim model at $39,195.

Drivers will be pleasantly surprised at the fine handling and quiet ride of all Sorento models — and the main reason why Sorento is way better off on this lighter "car platform," with fully independent suspension. The least expensive seven-seat model is the FWD V6 LX at $30,295.

2011 Kia Sorento

Type: Compact crossover
Price: $23,995-$39,195
Engine: I4, DOHC 2.4L/V6, DOHC 3.5L
HP: 175@6,000/276@6,300

Highlights

- Built in the U.S.
- Over 15 models, including seven-seater
- Impressive V6 powertrain

Inside, the 2011 Kia Sorento may not have a "wow" factor but there are plenty of functional options.

Honda's solar hydrogen station prototype.

Hydrogen at home

TECH Honda recently began operation of a next-generation solar hydrogen station prototype at the Los Angeles Center of Honda R&D Americas, intended for ultimate use as a home refueling appliance capable of an overnight refill of fuel cell electric vehicles.

Designed as a single, integrated unit to fit in the user's garage, Honda's next-generation Solar Hydrogen Station reduces the size of the system, while producing enough hydrogen (0.5kg) via an eight-hour overnight fill for daily commuting (16,000 kilometres per year) for a fuel cell electric vehicle.

The previous solar hydrogen station system required both an electrolyzer and a separate compressor unit to create high pressure hydrogen. The compressor was the largest and most expensive component and reduced system efficiency.

By creating a new high differential pressure electrolyzer, Honda engineers were able to eliminate the compressor entirely — a world's first for a home use system.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Odyssey debut in Chicago
Honda Motor Company will debut a concept version of the next-generation Honda Odyssey minivan at the 2010 Chicago Auto Show on Feb. 10, the company announced. CANADIANDRIVER.COM

Auto show like Vitamin D in winter

Lots of sobering auto news of late… Many pedestrians at the sharp end of run-ins with motorists… Toyota fixing quite a lot of gas pedals… Ontario ends its grace period for cellphoning while driving and begins to hand out $150 "reminders."

Time for some auto escapism.

I thought our buddy James Cameron would have helped out here. Given his ground breaking film technology, he could have gave his Avatar people some really fantastical motorized rides, but nooooo... He goes all mythical creature-like, which is so last century.

But we can reliably secure our fix for things shiny and mechanical, at one of this winter's auto shows. Montreal starts the Canadian auto show season off with a bang in early January, followed by Edmonton later in the month, Toronto next week, Calgary in mid-March, and Vancouver in late March. There are lots of great regional shows as well.

Any will do. As long as it's indoors, where the cars stay shiny, and the "presenters" never seem to age.

It's one of the rare places where one can receive the automotive equivalent of Vitamin D during the dark days of winter.

And if you're like me, you probably spend more time in front of computer and TV screens during winter. Auto shows are nice reminders that dream cars actually do exist in the flesh. You can touch them, and in some cases, plant your butt in the driver's seat.

Playboy centrefold Marilyn Hanold poses with the Jaguar E-type coupe at the 1961 New York Auto Show. Auto shows have always been a hub of entertainment and information, our columnist says.

Another reason I love auto shows, is that they encourage distraction. I walk a crooked line at all times during my auto show tours.

You're happily engrossed one moment, with, say, the new bed liner in a full-size pickup, when you spot, off in the distance, the profile of yet another new re-born muscle car.

So off you go. But on the way, you have to negotiate around the midsize sedan that you always maintained was the most boring car ever built, so you need to point that out to your show mates.

But you can't see them, because they're off on their own crazy tangents, those idiots, so you might as well check out this new crossover that's right over here, because your brother is considering one, and wants you to check out the headroom.

Not that he's tall — he's actually kind of short — but because he has an unusually long torso.

And then you hear music. Loud dance music that suggests it might be coming from some sort of performance or fashion show. Wouldn't want to miss that...

"It might be a bit rich to call auto show meandering as "living in the moment" but I'm pretty sure it's close to it ... and I heartily recommend it."

It might be a bit rich to call auto show meandering as "living in the moment" but I'm pretty sure it's close to it, probably on the same road, and I heartily recommend it.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for over 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

Wheat straw makes for one hot seat

JIL MCINTOSH
for Metro Canada

The quest for "green" vehicles is far more than just fuel consumption or emissions: What goes into a car can be just as important as what comes out of it. That's the reason why Ford Flex contains a revolutionary new plastic that's reinforced with wheat straw.

"We can use the chopped straw to replace some of the pure polypropylene, so we're replacing a petroleum product," says Dr. Leonardo Simon, associate professor in the department of chemical engineering at the University of Waterloo, where the plastic was developed. "Or we can use it to replace mineral fillers like glass fibre or talc. Those are twice as heavy as wheat straw, so you're saving weight."

Ford currently uses the plastic on the 2010 Flex's third-row storage bin. The company says that with this application alone, it is reducing petroleum use by more than 9,000 kg per year, and is creating a market for wheat straw, the leftover stalks once wheat is harvested.

"We developed this plastic in 2004, through a grant funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture," Simon says. "A colleague at the University of Guelph invited me to participate in the grant. The challenge was to improve value for farmers."

"If you have part of a car made of polypropylene with wheat straw, at the end of life, you can grind it and use it again."
U of Waterloo's Dr. Leonardo Simon

The initial work was low-key: They brought a bale of straw into the lab. "

A lot had been done on the agricultural side, but it was mostly on live plants," Simon says. "Nobody spent a lot of time analyzing wheat straw from a bale." The most difficult process was chopping it, since farm machinery cuts it into pieces small enough for animal bedding or compost, but not nearly fine enough to add to plastic.

Once they were able to grind the straw cost-effectively, the next challenge was temperature: The plastic had to be warm enough to easily mold into shapes, but if it got too hot, the straw would break down.

The wheat-based straw also offers opportunities at the end of the car's life, and Simon says the plastic has performed well in recycling trials. "If you have part of a car made of polypropylene with wheat straw, at the end of life, you can grind it and use it again."

Eco-friendly car seats made from wheat straw are available on the 2010 Ford Flex.

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Cars improve crash test ratings

New designs have helped the 2010 Ford Mustang convertible, Acura MDX and Toyota Tundra to improve their ratings in crash tests performed by the U.S. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). **CANADIANDRIVER.COM**

Luxury you can afford

The Ford Five Hundred

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
for Metro Canada

MODEL: 2005 to 2007 Ford Five Hundred
VEHICLE TYPE: Large Sedan
APPROXIMATE USED PRICE RANGE: $9,000 to $17,000

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: Ford launched its Five Hundred as a 2005 model that fell into a re-energized American sedan marketplace. A big and comfortable "sofa sedan," the Five Hundred was Ford's answer to Chrysler's stately and handsome 300.

After 2007, Ford dropped the Five Hundred nameplate and baffled the media and customers by renaming their large sedan the Taurus.

So, why consider the first-generation Five Hundred as a used ride? Those after a big, comfortable car will find it less expensive than comparable models like the Toyota Avalon, as well as larger than machines like the Chevrolet Impala. If it's a spacious, easy-to-drive and accommodating ride you're after, the Five Hundred should prove fairly cost-effective.

Look for standard V6 power, available All Wheel Drive (AWD), power adjustable leather seats, an auto-dimming rearview mirror, power adjustable pedals and backup radar. Wood trim, a CD changer and a sunroof were also available.

In the used market, more basic Five Hundred models were badged as SE, while the SEL and Limited trim levels identified mid and top-range models, respectively.

WHAT OWNETS LIKE: Owners of the Five Hundred typically report satisfaction with the outward visibility, generous space at each seat, and a solid, planted and heavy ride. Another positive, say most owners, is a tall, commanding and nearly SUV-like view of the road ahead. Finally, the Five Hundred's safety ratings impressed many family-minded drivers.

Second Gear

WHAT OWNETS HATE: Owner complaints tend to deal with controversial styling, no optional engine upgrade, and acceptable, but unexciting performance in the acceleration department. Many owners also dislike the sound and "feel" of the shift-less CVT transmission. These folks will recommend the six-speed automatic every time, and so does this writer.

COMMON ISSUES: The Five Hundred is known for a rear-brake issue, which may create harshness that's apparent through the pedal as the vehicle stops. Be sure to "feel" the car while applying the brakes at various pressures and speeds, questioning any strange rough or grinding sensations.

Listen to the rear suspension for any metallic clacking or clunking sounds over bumps. This could indicate a worn out suspension component or the need for a revised style of shock absorber.

Remember that at full throttle, the CVT transmission feels like a badly slipping automatic transmission — so don't confuse the two.

Trouble starting in the cold may require reprogramming of the engine computer, and a buzzing or hissing noise from the speakers can be caused by electrical interference from the fuel pump. This problem is fixed with a simple electronic filter wired into the circuit.

Ensure all interior electronics are working properly, paying special attention to the automatic climate control, motorized seat controls and all windows.

THE VERDICT: The Five Hundred should satisfy most luxury-oriented buyers after plenty of space, even if it's not the most powerful machine in its class. Look for a good deal on a used model with warranty coverage if possible, and take advantage of the favourable size to price ratio.

#Limited time lease offers based on new 2010 Honda models. Lease example based on new 2010 CR-V LX 2WD, model RE3H3AEY available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. 2.9% lease APR for 48 months. Monthly payment (TURN-KEY PRICE includes $1,725 freight and PDI, environmental fees and OMVIC fee) is $268. Down payment or equivalent trade of $5,083. First monthly payment and $0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $20,141.11. Taxes, licenses, insurance (lien registration where applicable) are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. ‡Purchase price is $17,420 for new 2010 Honda model Civic DX Sedan, model FA1E2AEX, available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. APR is 3.9% for 60 months. Monthly payment is $317. Down payment of $1,425 or equivalent trade is required. Total obligation is $20,425. Taxes, licenses, insurance (lien registration where applicable) are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. ¥Prices lowered by $1,500 on all new 2010 CR-V LX 2WD, $1,000 on all new 2010 Civic DX Sedan, $500 on all new 2010 Accord LX Sedan / trade may be necessary. ¥Prices lowered by $500 on all new 2010 Accord 4-cylinder models; by $1,000 on all new 2010 Accord V6 models; by $1,000 on all new 2010 Civic models except Hybrid; by $1,500 on all new 2010 CR-V models. #'0%' Offers valid from January 27th, 2010 through March 1st, 2010 at participating Honda retailers. Offers valid only for Ontario residents at Ontario Honda Dealers. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. See Centre Honda retailer for full details. *As reported by Canadian manufacturers for calendar year 2009.

Simple Civic chef's choice

MyDrive

Heather Buchan

metronews.ca/mydrivve

Name: Steven Silvestro

What's he known for: Corporate chef, Il Fornello. Silvestro develops and conceives the restaurant chain's special menus including their upcoming Winterlicious menu. After training at George Brown College and then in Italy for two years, Silvestro worked as a chef at Pastis Restaurant and Bar before joining Il Fornello.

His drive: "A 2009 Honda Civic. It's as white as a car could be."

Is he a car guy? "Not at all. I like to drive, but I was never a car-obsessed young man. I didn't go out and buy a car as soon as I turned 16."

Why Honda Civic? "Actually, it's a company car. Part of my job as corporate chef is to drive to all eight Il Fornello locations around the GTA for quality control and to make sure the recipes are going my way, so that's why the company provides me with the car."

Chef Steven Silvestro of the Il Fornello group of restaurants.

Best thing about the Civic: "It's so simple, a child almost could drive it. Everything is just at your fingertips. It's so easy to use. And the windshield is so big, you can see everything. It's a peppy little car."

Driving style: "I'm not aggressive at all. I'm a relaxed kind of guy and that translates into my driving."

Dream car: "This might sound a little strange, but I'm obsessed with the old VW camper vans. I would love to have one that's in great shape and go camping with my son. Maybe I'm obsessed with them because they have a kitchen inside."

Steven Silvestro drives a 2009 Honda Civic similar to this one.

• Il Fornello is offering a three-course prix fixe menu as part of Winterlicious. Sundays to Thursdays to Feb. 11.

Heather Buchan is a Toronto-based journalist who has worked at Homemakers, Canadian Living, Canadian House & Home and, most recently, Hello! Canada, where she cut her teeth in the world of celebrities.

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Travel

Heading south for the winter?

Interstate 75 and the 401 is a unique and comprehensive guide that covers Ontario Highway 401 to the U.S. border at Detroit then south along the I-75 to Florida. A quick reference section by exit shows details for gas stations, restaurants and lodgings, with plenty of interesting side trips to sites nearby. As a bonus, there are 300 coupons worth over $2,000 for restaurants, inns, motels, campgrounds, gas stations, historic sites, amusement parks and other sites.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: BEN.RYCROFT@METRONEWS.CA

Untouched beauty found in Faroes

Visitors tread carefully as these tiny islands rank among world's best for sustainable tourism

ANNE SOPHIE TEGLBORG
Metro World News

METRO WORLD NEWS

In 2007, National Geographic ranked the Faroe Islands as the most unspoiled island destination on the planet.

METRO WORLD NEWS

The Faroe Islands are home to the world's smallest capital city. Tórshavn has a population of 19,000.

From a ledge on a rock the red-beaked puffin takes flight.

Below it lie the panorama of green hillsides, villages, foaming waterfalls and grass-roofed houses that make up the least spoilt island group in the world.

The bird land on the statue of local hero Nólsayar Páll, and here, in the capital city, life and nature meet on equal terms. But when you move away from Torshavn and out among the scattered villages, you get a real impression of how wild these islands can be.

More than 75.000 sheep live here and they obviously feel that they have a right to walk down even the busiest of roads at their own pace.

A trip out to look at the birds on the cliffs is a must when you are on the Faroe Islands.

This is a paradise for ornithologists and amateurs alike and the colonies of puffins on the cliff ledges are a delight as are the seals and whales which come up for air just offshore.

From a boat nature is even more breathtaking. The cliffs seem higher and the sea seems bigger.

However you see the Faroes you will find everyone is a friendly tour guide.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The Faroe Islands was honoured in 2007 by National Geographic as it conducted a comprehensive survey of 111 island communities throughout the world.

A panel of experts in sustainable tourism assessed the Faroe islands and rated them on a list of the most unspoiled.

They were rated ahead of the Azores, Lofoten and exotic islands such as Bermuda and Hawaii.

The islands continue to earn high marks for preservation of nature, historic architecture and local pride.

However, National Geographic readers that it was necessary to "tread carefully" in order not to destroy the very places that are cherished, especially on the islands of a more modest size. Tourists are expected to do as the Faroese, such as travelling on the rolling ferries with caution and hiking their way through all sorts of weather.

Nevertheless, as the expert panel concluded, where there is a strong sense of identity and cultural heritage, there is a solid foundation for sensible development.

Faroe facts

- The Faroe Islands consist of 18 islands, of which 17 are inhabited – though two of the islands only have one family.
- The islands are known for their rich animal life, but there are few insects and no mosquitoes.
- The sea around the islands is the primary source of income, and all Faroese own a boat.
- The Faroese love to dance, and at the annual Saint Olav's Day Festival in July the islanders take a few days off work and dance and party for several days in the capital.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Fresh food is widely available.

TRY THE WHALE

Lamb, not surprisingly, features quite prominently on the menu but the Faroese are keen on introducing tourists to the blubber of the Long-finned Pilot Whale.

It comes with a serious health warning though — catching Pilot Whales and eating their meat is soon to be history because of high levels of mercury in the sea.

Officially the Faroese are advised against putting it on the menu but traditional dishes can still be enjoyed in the small village of Gjóvg, 67 kms from the capital.

GRASS ROOFTOPS

The grass roofs on the Faroese Houses are probably the first things you'll notice, and these have been a feature since they were first settled. In the Viking Age farmhouses, with its curved stone walls, the roof was supported by two rows of posts in a large common room with a longfire in the centre. Along the outer walls benches or seats were placed and a Faroese home today is still called a sethús (seat house) after these seats. And there is a good reason that the ancient name has survived, for on the Faroes the original longhouse lasted longer than any other place in Scandinavia.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Visitors to the show are encouraged to submit their best photos of how they discovered boating for a chance to win a boating prize pack. Visit MiamiBoatShow.com for more details.

World's best boat show set to dock in Miami

Prepare for this season on the lakes with budget friendly purchases and a Super Bowl size party

Heading to Miami for the Super Bowl? You might want to stick around an extra week as the biggest boat show in the world sails into Miami's port.

The 69th annual Miami International Boat Show & Strictly Sail Miami cruises into town Feb. 11 to 15, where new and experienced boaters from throughout the world can gather in one place to view, board and buy the best the boating industry has to offer.

With special deals on everything from sportfishers, sailboats and megayachts to engines and the newest electronics, the 2010 Miami International Boat Show will be the prime location for boaters in North America this year.

The five-day event draws tens of thousands of visitors each year and hosts more than 2,000 exhibitors from around the world, filling the Miami Beach Convention Center and Sea Isle Marina & Yachting Center with thousands of boats and hundreds of booths showcasing the latest gear and accessories.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Celebrate the South Florida sunsets with other boating and fishing enthusiasts.

BEST DEALS

Boating is more budget-friendly than you may think. The Affordability Pavilion is returning for the second year, showcasing boats for those with smaller budgets, highlighting pricing options and displaying boats that visitors can finance for $250 or less.

PARTY HEARTY

Celebrate the South Florida sunsets with fellow boating enthusiasts and enjoy food and drink specials from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11, through to Sunday along Convention Center Drive at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Something for all boaters, fishermen

NEED FOR SPEED

Miss GEICO is back. The world's fastest offshore racing boat, powered with the same turbine engines that flew missions in the first Gulf War and can reach speeds of more than 185 miles per hour, will dazzle any boating enthusiast with a need for speed.

It will be showcased at various times throughout the weekend.

TEST YOUR MUSCLE

The Big Game Room is celebrating its 7th year as the one-stop marketplace for every angler.

With new exhibits, the latest fishing products and destinations, activities and daily seminars from the pros, the Big Game Room is a must. Have a drink at the Marlin Bar while waiting for the next educational seminar to begin; take a walk over to the interactive Bait Rigging Station, where visitors can improve their rigging techniques; or try the new Chair Fighting Challenge — the Mechanical Bull of the Fishing World.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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In most North American cities hailing a cab is a nearly impossible task, especially after hours. TaxiMagic.com solves this problem that lets you book, track and pay for a cab, all from your iPhone or BlackBerry. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Breakneck speeds over Barcelona

Experience a once-in-a-lifetime 50 second freefall at Europe's top skydiving location

RAQUEL ESCOBAR
Metro World News

It started with a dare. My boyfriend proposed we go parachuting in Empuriabrava a little town close to Barcelona.

I had my doubts, I said I would think about it and call him.

Strangely enough — the next day I found he had already made reservations for both of us to do a tandem skydive at Skydive Empuriabrava.

At $250 a fall, there was no going back.

On Friday we headed to the tiny village of Empuriabrava in the Costa Brava, which just happens to be Europe's top skydiving centre.

There are plenty of hotels, restaurants and bars but I was so worried I just went to bed.

On Saturday morning I looked out of the window and saw at least 10 people falling from the sky and thought 'how hard can it be?'

At the centre I met Verónica who told us we were going to take a 15 minute flight to about 4,000 metres then jump out (securely attached to a Tandem instructor) and experience a 50 second freefall before the parachute wouk open and we glide for another five minutes before landing.

Sounded simple.

Allen, my Belgian Tandem instructor who has 20 years experience was professional and confident.

He helped strap me in, and still everything was oddly casual.

Then we got on the plane with seven other people and took off.

At first I took in the view of the Costa Brava then, suddenly, someone opened the door and my boyfriend was gone — jumping from 4,000 m.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Skydive Empuriabrava offers unparalleled views of Spain and Barcelona.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Regular visitors to Spain will not want to miss this unique view of Barcelona.

And it was right then where the fear kicked in.

It really hit me to see how far up we were and how quickly he disappeared from view.

I started thinking, no, not me, I can't do this.

Turns out I didn't have a choice as, one second later, thanks to the lovely Allen, I was in the air.

I was dropping, filled with pure adrenaline, left to stare into the abyss as I felt my heart pumping and the wind melting my cheeks dropping at a cool 200 km per hour.

Then the parachute released and we were pulled upwards for a spilt second before floating effortlessly for five minutes over Empuriabrava and the breathtaking Bay of Roses.

The feeling was like nothing I have ever experienced and on landing I was overwhelmed by total relief that I was alive and an incredible desire to do it again.

The tandem skydive is not for the faint hearted, it's aimed at adrenaline junkies.

But jumping out of a plane at 4,000 m is an immense personal challenge. Letting go of your inhibitions and embracing the fear can make this a lifetime experience.

Barcelona hotels

- Hotel Princesa Sofia Barcelona (five star hotel): This five star renovated hotel is located in the new financial district of Barcelona and is near FC Barcelona stadium
- Hotel Via Augusta Barcelona (two star hotel): If you're looking to travel on the cheap this peaceful hotel is close to the Barcelona centre. It is situated just a stone's throw from Avenida Diagonal and is close enough to the downtown that you can walk.

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Acapulco for all budgets

Metro finds the places to stay, play and eat at this Mexican gem

GABRIELA GUTIÉRREZ
Metro World News

METRO WORLD NEWS

Pueblo Bravo rafting offers rapids of all difficulty levels.

Mexico can be a tricky place to navigate — especially if you are on a budget.

But whether you are looking to save a few pesos or willing to blow the bank, Acapulco offers something for everyone.

Metro has gathered a list of where to stay, play and eat for all budgets.

DAILY BUDGET — $50

Where to eat:

Kookaburna is one of the most romantic and exclusive restaurants. Its thatched roof and candlelight compliment the splendid views of the bay. It has excellent service and great wine list.

Where to stay:

Alba Suites is only 40 minutes away from the airport and is set on a peaceful hillside in front of the bay. Close to Caleta and Caletilla beaches, this quiet, cozy hotel perfect for families.
(albasuites.com.mx)

Where to go:

Cici Water Park is located by the beach, where families can enjoy the day in different pools and on various water-rides. It also features a dolphin show as well as a swim with the dolphins option.
(cici.com.mx)

METRO WORLD NEWS

Cici Water Park has a swim with the dolphins option.

DAILY BUDGET — $100

Where to eat:

Bellavista offers dinner under the stars. With the best view of Acapulco and an unforgettable gastronomic experience, this one is a must visit.

Retro architecture lends an romantic, refined and elegant atmosphere.
(brisashotelonline.com)

Where to stay:

Grand Hotel Acapulco & Convention Centre is a great hotel located in the Bay of Acapulco, overlooking the Pacific.

Restaurants with specialist chefs, two swimming pools, tropical gardens, and a private beach make this an easy choice.
(grandhotelacapulco.com)

Where to go:

Pueblo Bravo is an eight-km descent in inflatable rafts through the canyon of the Papagayo River.

Spectacular rapids, scenery and wildlife will thrill and provide you with fun even if your boat happens to spill.
(shotoverjet.com.mx/Contenido_rafting.html)

DAILY BUDGET — $500

Where to eat:

Zibu reclaims the historical importance of Acapulco in the spice trade combining fine oriental ingredients with the best of Mexican cuisine to create an original Mex-Thai menu.
(zibu.com.mx)

Where to stay:

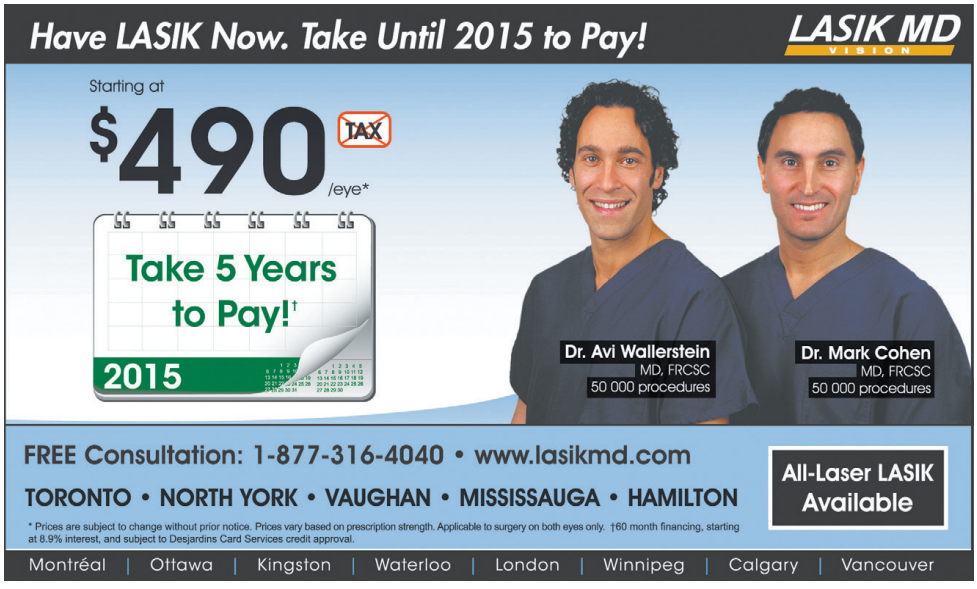
Fairmont Acapulco Princess is recognized as one of the top hotels in the world overlooking 480 acres of legendary Mexican scenery. This faultless Aztec pyramid-shaped hotel will amaze for its looks but also for its world-class service.
(fairmont.com/Acapulco)

Where to go:

Experience the tri-factor of Mexican tourism: scuba diving, snorkeling and sportfishing

Though not widely thought of as a dive destination, Acapulco offers many enthusiasts a safe and enjoyable underwater experience.
(fish-r-us.com)

Family friendly activities available



Gauge if you're being gouged
To avoid being gouged at the rental car gas pump try GasBuddy.com, a free service that provides real-time information on the lowest gas prices in your local area. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Belize's underwater wonders

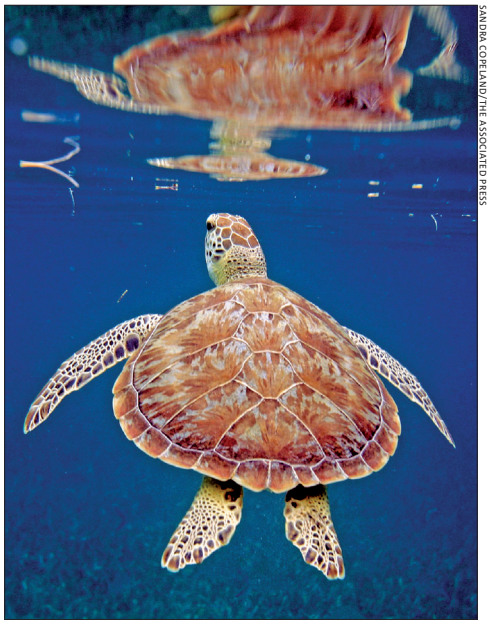
The West's longest unbroken barrier reef has creatures of all kinds

It was a dark, rainy, grey day. We don't go for monochrome excursions during our tropical adventures, so this kind of day was not acceptable.

Nonetheless, my two teenage children and I were going to make the best of our snorkeling trip along the Belize Barrier Reef, the longest unbroken reef in the Western Hemisphere. We were near the island of Caye Caulker, which is situated just off the coast of Belize. The search for a diverse palette was our mission with our boat captain guide, Harry Woods of E-Z Boys Tours.

So, onward down into the water we dove. Looking up, we found a ceiling of rain droplets falling from the sky, patterned on the ocean surface. But our aqua world below offered a rainbow of hues.

We saw creatures of all shapes and sizes, travelling mostly in groups, though a few, like the moray eel, cautiously ventured out alone from their homes in the coral. And back they'd retreat as soon as they had satiated their curiosity about us.



SANDRA COPELAND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tropical adventures await in Belize Barrier Reef.

We gingerly tiptoed by stingrays and swam lightly through the many schools of fish, never once feeling like an intruder. Some schools tucked themselves behind strands of coral while others boldly glided about.

Our temporary visit almost appeared humorous to the fish whose mouths were permanently fixed in a grin.

A shark took a look while cruising by us while porpoises playfully swam alongside the boat as they frolicked about, almost inviting us to join them.

As we made our way back to the boat, the merging of sea and sky seemed dreamlike, and the grey gave way to sun.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$80 There are several snorkeling tour operators across Belize offering a variety of options on the basic tour experience but the majority will offer trips that include lunch, a few drinks and guided lessons for $80. As it is with anything, the more you pay the more you get.

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Flights from Toronto via Air Transat or Skyservice. Prices shown are per person, based on double occupancy in lead room category. Taxes are extra and noted above. Space & prices are subject to availability at time of booking and subject to change without notice. For full descriptions and terms and conditions refer to the Nolitours 2009-2010 Sun brochure. Nolitours is a division of Transat Tours Canada Inc., and is registered as a travel wholesaler in Ontario (Ont reg #50009488) with offices at 191 The West Mall, Suite 800 Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K8. tico.ca

Super Bowl tickets still available

Metro recommends this website nfl.com/ticketexchange to safely buy Super Bowl tickets and not pay a broker's fee. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Grab a slice of Pisa

PAUL BALDWIN
Metro World News

Compact, busy and with a no-brainer must-see, Pisa makes a superb destination for those looking for a little more form their spring break.

The brilliant white tower really does take your breath away but the city has so much more to offer.

MUST SEE

Piazza del Duomo

Basically the three other historical gems of the large green field in the centre of Pisa. The cathedral, the baptistry and the cemetery are always destined to be a poor second best to the Leaning Tower despite them all being tourist draws in their own right. You're at the Tower anyway so you may as well take a look.

MANGIA, MANGIA

Pizzeria La Buca

So you get to sit outside, with a view of the Leaning Tower, a selection of half-decent house reds and a genuinely fabulous pizza and change from $10. What's not to like.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Pisa has more than a leaning tower to see.

DESSERT

La Bottega del Gelato

If ice-cream is something of an art form in Italy then in Pisa it's an obsession. Visit La Bottega del Gelato where the local students hang out and try the sublimely weird avocado ice-cream.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Bologna

A 10 minute walk from the tower this cool and well-priced hotel has 70 modern air-conditioned rooms and secluded patio garden for the sipping of the local Montecarlo wine.

Rooms start at $75. (hotelbologna.pisa.it)

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Travel Feb 8 - Feb 15/ts		+ taxes & fees $321
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Costa Rica Travel Feb 22 - Mar 1/wg	$295	+ taxes & fees $209
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Buenos Aires Travel Mar 30 - Apr 14/mx	$599	+ taxes & fees $345
Honolulu Travel Mar 23 - Apr 6/dl	$599	+ taxes & fees $119
Tokyo Travel Mar 4 - Mar 22/ua	$649	+ taxes & fees $302
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Sydney Travel Mar 4 - Mar 23/ac	$1349	+ taxes & fees $391

USA Vacations

Arizona & Nevada
Air + 7 Nights + Car Rental
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INCLUDES roundtrip air to Phoenix, car rental, first & last night accom in Phoenix at Hospitality Suite Resort, 2 nights accom in Sedona at Radisson Poco Diablo Resort, 2 nights accom just outside the Grand Canyon National Park at Canyon Plaza Resort and 2 nights accom in Las Vegas at Circus Circus. Travel Feb 24 - Mar 3/dl/ggv.

Atlantic City Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $149
Ballys Atlantic City + taxes & fees $109
Departs Mar 1/wsv/ws.

Miami Air + 7-Day Car $339
+ taxes & fees $119
Depart Feb 9/ggv.

California Coast Air + Car $489
+ taxes & fees $128
INCLUDES air into San Francisco & return from Los Angeles with 7-day car rental. Departs Feb 24/ggv/ac.

Arizona Air + 4 Nights $569
Hospitality Suite Resort + taxes & fees $126
INCLUDES accom in Scottsdale. Departs Feb 23/ggv/dl.

New Orleans Air + 3 Nights $569
Chateau Le Moyne + taxes & fees $129
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Luperon Beach Resort + taxes & fees $320
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Varadero 7 Nights 4-Star $527
Allegro Varadero + taxes & fees $210
Departs Feb 6/nol/ts.

Punta Cana 7 Nights 4-Star $568
Blau Natura Park + taxes & fees $320
Departs Feb 7/sgn/5g.

Cancun 7 Nights 3-Star $577
Celuisma Dos Playas + taxes & fees $272
Departs Feb 25/sqv/5g.

Jamaica 7 Nights 4-Star $647
Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort + taxes & fees $269
Departs Feb 5/sqv/5g.

Los Cabos 7 Nights 4.5-Star $999
Melia Cabo Real + taxes & fees $177
Departs Feb 6/swg/wg.

Valentine's Day Vacation

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Travel Feb 12 - 14/ggv.

March Break Vacations

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Tudor Hotel New York + taxes & fees $112
INCLUDES 2-night skip the line party pass to select night clubs in New York. Departs Mar 12 or 19/ggv/aa.

Las Vegas Air + 3 Nights $375
Circus Circus Hotel & Casino + taxes & fees $122
Departs Mar 15/ggv/ac.

Miami Air + 3 Nights + Activity $649
Sonesta Bayfront Resort + taxes & fees $114
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Cancun 7 Nights 4-Star All-inclusive $867
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Porter expanding its wings

Porter Airlines is introducing year-round flights between Sudbury and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, beginning Mar. 31. METRO NEWS SERVICES

METRO WORLD NEWS

Norway offers a chance to lead a team of husky dogs.

3 working holidays

EUGENE HENDERSON
Metro World News

If you like working hard and playing hard these trips are for you — and you can save some dough in the process.

BECOME AN ARTIST

Italy

English-speaking international artists are attempting to convert an old monastery in Umbria into a non-profit arts centre, and need help. It's an idyllic setting 70km north of Rome and the community is looking for "energetic dreamers" to help with arts projects, maintainance. You get a tent in an olive grove or shared room in guest house.

BECOME A FARMER

Virgin Islands

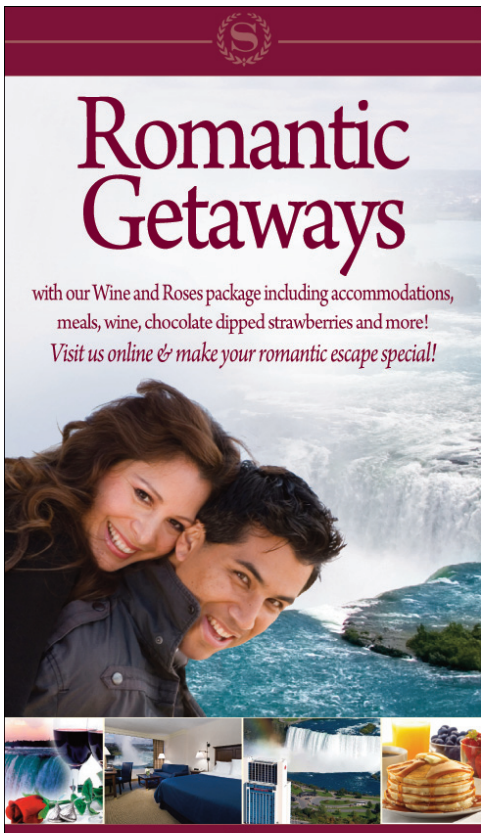
A hostel and campground is looking for "responsible volunteers" to help start an organic farm, assist with selling products, and routine duties including cooking, shopping, and gardening. The farm is highly eco-friendly and the owners say they are "open to suggestions, thoughts and ideas." Accommodation is cabins and ecotents. Slightly basic but hey this is the Caribbean so it's beautiful.

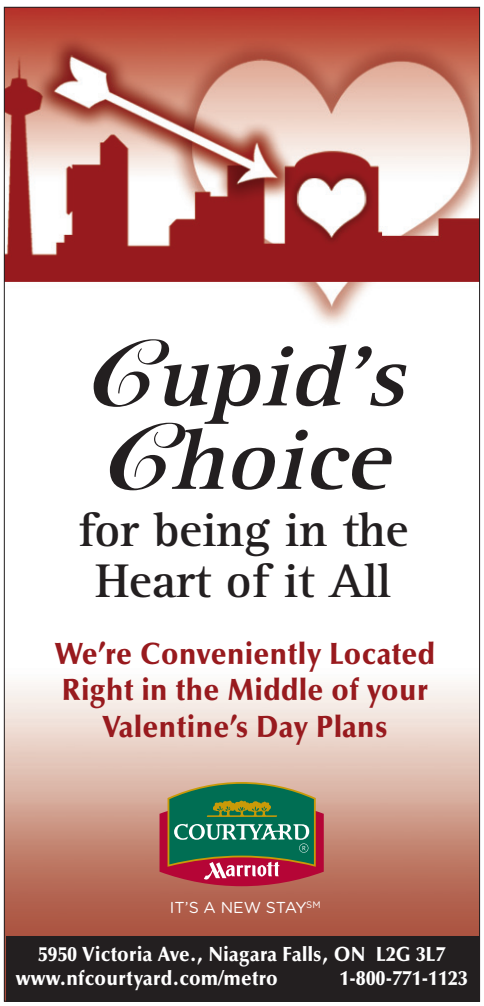
LEAD A HUSKY TEAM

Norway

Staying in a cabin at a lodge near the Karasjohka river, near Karasjok, you will look after and walk the team of 50 dogs and rent out cabins to tourists who come for husky sled rides. General maintenance is also expected. You get free accommodation and food during your stay and Not for couch potatoes.

Visit workaway.info for all these vacations.





We Are The World again

On Monday afternoon, an impressive list of stars — including Celine Dion, Jennifer Hudson, Justin Bieber and Kanye West — began arriving at the Jim Henson Studios in Hollywood to re-record the classic charity single We Are the World, this time for Haiti earthquake relief. USMAGAZINE.COM

Entertainment

No more TV

When Lost wraps up this May, don't expect Matthew Fox to find himself on another TV show. "I won't be doing any more television," the star, 43, says. USMAGAZINE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Avatar, Locker lead Oscar race

Hollywood Votes

Academy Awards

The science-fiction sensation Avatar and the war-on-terror thriller The Hurt Locker lead the Academy Awards with nine nominations each, including best picture and director for former spouses James Cameron and Kathryn Bigelow.

For the first time since 1943 the Oscars feature 10 best-picture contenders instead of the usual five.

Also nominated for best-picture yesterday: District 9; the animated comedy Up; the Second World War saga Inglourious Basterds; the football drama The Blind Side; the recession tale Up in The Air, the 1960s drama A Serious Man, and the teen tales An Education and Precious: Based on the Novel Push By Sapphire.

Acting nominees include the four stars who have dominated early awards shows: Lead players Sandra Bullock for the football drama The Blind Side and Jeff Bridges for the country-music tale Crazy Heart and supporting performers Mo'Nique for Precious and Christoph Waltz for Inglourious Basterds.

MATT SAYLES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MATT SAYLES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MATT SAYLES/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Academy Award nominees announced yesterday include, clockwise from left, Jeff Bridges, best actor for country music tale Crazy Heart, Kathryn Bigelow best director for war thriller The Hurt Locker, sci-fi thriller Avatar for best picture, and Sandra Bullock best actress for football drama The Blind Side. Awards will be presented March 7.

The best-picture and director categories shape up as a showdown between ex-spouses who directed films that have dominated earlier Hollywood honours.

Cameron's Avatar won best drama and director at the Golden Globes, while Bigelow's The Hurt Locker beat out Cameron at the Directors Guild of America Awards, whose recipient usually goes on to earn the best-director Oscar.

The Hurt Locker also beat Avatar for the Producers Guild of America top prize and was chosen as last year's best film by many key critics groups.

Bigelow said she was gratified and humbled.

"It's a huge, huge compliment to the entire cast and crew," she said. "It was a very difficult shoot of heat and sun and windstorms and sandstorms and they had to unite crew from Lebanon and Israel."

Bigelow is only the fourth woman nominated for a directing Oscar. No woman has ever won the directing Oscar, and until Bigelow, no woman had ever won the Directors Guild honour.

Lee Daniels, who made Precious, became only the second black filmmaker nominated for best director, after John Singleton for 1991's Boyz N the Hood.

There will also be some competition among Canadians in the directing category. Montreal-born director Jason Reitman, nominated for Up in the Air will compete against Cameron, who was born in Kapuskasing, Ont.

Rounding out the directing category is Quentin Tarantino for Inglourious Basterds.

Vancouver-based Neill Blomkamp and Terri Tatchell, meanwhile, are nominated for best adapted screenplay for District 9.

Bullock is up against past Oscar winners Meryl Streep as chef Julia Child in Julie&Julia and Helen Mirren as Leo Tolstoy's bull-headed wife in The Last Station, along with first-time nominees Carey Mulligan as a British teen involved with an older man in An Education and Gabourey Sidibe as a Harlem teen overcoming horrible abuse and neglect in Precious.

Also nominated for best actor are past Oscar winners George Clooney as a frequent-flyer junkie in Up in the Air and Morgan Freeman as South African leader Nelson Mandela in Invictus, Colin Firth as a grieving gay academic in A Single Man and Jeremy Renner as a bomb disposal expert in Iraq in The Hurt Locker. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

m.metronews.ca

Scan this barcode or visit metronews.ca/entertainment for a complete list of Academy Award nominees

Following news stories on Twitter...

OscarTweets

@666300 I think Cold Souls deserved a nomination. Paul Giamatti delivered another excellent performance. Watchmen was not nominated for ANYTHING? How did Inglourious Basterds get passed up for a Costume Design nomination?

@NFB_Jennifer snubbed: Sharlto Copley from District 9. Had barely acted before and he carried the film ... absolutely riveting.

@carr2n And Lee Daniels deserves director nom for seeing in Precious what no one else saw.

@LarsenOnFilm The Cove gets a deserving Oscar nod as Best Documentary. Probably one of the most disturbing docs I've seen.

@jimjumpsuittv: I just realized Where The Wilds Things Are was not nominated for anything.

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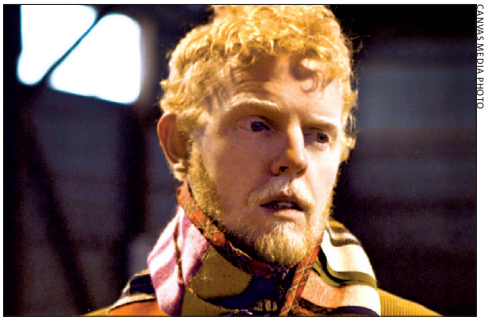
Back in Black

Gentleman Reg settles into Drake residency

BRIAN TOWIE
Metro Canada



CANWEST MEDIA PHOTO

Gentleman Reg is back in town after touring behind Jet Black.

Gentleman Reg thought it was nice to get away, but even nicer to come home.

After a year abroad of touring Jet Black, a melodramatic, twang-filled work released this time last year, and his more recent six-song Heavy Head EP, the Toronto folk singer-songwriter will park his weary feet at the Drake Underground for a month-long residency going every Wednesday night at 9:30 p.m. in February.

It will mark the first time in a while Gentleman Reg (né Reg Vermue) has headlined a show, spending the past year opening for The Stills and The Hidden Cameras among others. But the tranquility and relaxed lifestyle of life at home brought Reg back from the road and put the power back into his pen.

"I'm writing and working new music and it's going really well. That's something I can't do on the road," he said. "It's something I have to do alone, at least the initial stuff, and I never got a moment with this past tour."

Ever the collaborator (Reg most recently appeared on track Flare Gun from Owen Pallet's Heartland), the stint will also include Reg's hand-picked special guests By Divine Right, The Balconies and all-girl Weezer cover group Sheezer.

"I wanted to choose bands from very different musical scenes from Toronto to bring out more people," he said. "Some are old friends, some I haven't even seen but I've heard a lot about them and I wanted to experience them."

In all then, a perfect situation for the singer-songwriter: A chance to reconnect with old friends, an opportunity to keep a healthy work-life balance and a steady local gig where he can try out new material.

"Usually you can't play your own city too often, so we're getting around that rule," he laughs. "And besides that, it gives us something to do."

In Concert

- Gentleman Reg kicks off a month-long Wednesday residency tonight at the Drake Underground, 9:30 p.m.

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Actor killed in SUV crash

An actor who appeared on the TV show Boston Legal has been killed in an SUV crash in Wisconsin. The Iowa County Sheriff's Department says Justin Mentell was killed Monday when his SUV went down an embankment and hit two tree. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sad tale of Othello

JOHN KEILLOR
for Metro Canada

MICHAEL COOPER PHOTO

Scott Hendricks as Iago and Clifton Forbis as Othello in the Canadian Opera Company's production of Othello.

How opera tragedy makes impact is perfectly illustrated in Othello, Verdi's adaptation of Shakespeare's play.

The title character, a 16th century Moorish general working in Venice, is made to believe his wife Desdamona is carrying on with another man. Distraught beyond reason, Othello kills her. When he discovers it's all a racist lie fueled by professional jealousy, he kills himself, shattered and humiliated.

It's brutally sad, and it's easy to overlook how Desdamona, an Italian lady married to a Spanish Arab, was always in danger of social backlash.

"She is such a strong woman, like how we would describe an independent woman from 50 years ago," explains Italian soprano Tiziana Caruso, who will sing as Desdamona with the Canadian Opera Company this week. "As the wife, she is stronger than Othello in some ways. They are a mature couple, and she knows her love is whole. Othello is nervous. He worries that his not being Italian is a disadvantage, and that she will naturally come to love men more like her.

Verdi's 1887 version takes The Bard's devastating play and milks the agonizing moments, like when Ensign Iago, the worst scoundrel in the History of Villains, sings with demented glee, his plot to deceive Othello. And when the Moorish General is finally standing over his sleeping Desdamona, preparing to kill, his mind racing in so many directions it's useless. The madness and misery racing through him is captured with romantic orchestral writing that penetrates the general's toxic confusion.

When she awakes, seeing her husband remade as her murderer, she is more afraid for his soul than for her own life, encapsulating her seamless true love for him, twisting the blade of tragedy inside the viewer.

"Desdamona's fault is that she thinks Othello understands all, but he can't," says Caruso. "She is a modern woman and sees Othello as modern as well. She does not realize how others like Iago will find ways to bring out in her husband primitive masculine fears."

Now playing

- Othello debuts at the Four Season Centre tonight and continues Feb. 6, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25 & 28. Times vary. Go to coc.ca for details.

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Hennessy's emotional visit
Jill Hennessy paid an emotional tribute to six-year-old leukaemia victim Jasmina Anema on Sunday when she sang a tune written especially for the tragic youngster at her funeral. Little Anema lost her battle with a rare form of the disease last week. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

No more Mr. Nice Guy

Travolta reflects on new ruthless role and a 37-year career

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

John Travolta, left, plays a violent special agent in the Pierre Morel-directed film From Paris With Love.

Whether it's strutting his stuff to the Bee Gees, munching down a Royal With Cheese with Samuel L. Jackson, or swapping faces with Nicholas Cage, John Travolta has provided audiences with a laundry list of memorable movie moments.

Over a 37-year career, Travolta has become one of the most recognizable faces in film. But when looking back on his early work, the actor admits that he can barely recognize himself.

"I see a little boy in those movies," Travolta says. "I thought I was very advanced in those days, but I know much more now. I was lucky to start in this industry with a bang and I'm even luckier to still be here."

This week audiences may see a side of Travolta they never expected in From Paris With Love. The star plays a ruthless special agent with no qualms about shooting first without ever getting to the questions.

From Paris With Love opens in theatres on Friday

"It's a pretty extreme character. I don't think anyone has seen me quite this way before and that was the reason to do it," says Travolta. "We decided that the only way it would work was to be bold with the character and go all the way."

No matter how violent or over-the-top his character might be, Travolta was never worried about harming his nice-guy image. "It wasn't a concern because he's not really a villain. He's a good guy with unorthodox methods."

The movie is an all-out action thrill ride filled with car chases, gunfights, explosions, and at least one rocket launcher. Surprisingly the 55-year old actor ended up doing most of his own stunts on the project.

"When we started I said to (director) Pierre Morel, 'Do you really want me to do all of these stunts because I'm an old man?'" says Travolta. "But there was such a confidence there that I thought I'd better to live up to their expectations and really went for it. It paid off because I've never done this much action in a movie before. Somehow the old body was still able to do it."

From Paris With Love also gave Travolta the opportunity to change his appearance, shaving his head and growing a goatee for the role. It's certainly a jarring look that the actor and director claim they got from photos of special agents in Soldier Of Fortune magazine

Audiences are sure to be caught off guard, but that's what the actor hoped for and it reminded him of his approach to one of his most famous roles.

"It was similar to Pulp Fiction where it was my idea to do that Dutch Boy thing," says Travolta. "The character had just been in Europe, so I thought it would be an appropriate Eurotrash look. I remember Quentin Tarantino thinking it wasn't a good idea, but we did a screen test and he loved it. In both movies my look is the signature of the character. In film image is important and not to be looked at as superficial at all."

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Barrymore rep dismisses engagement talk

Drew Barrymore's representative has dismissed reports the actress is engaged to on/off lover Justin Long. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Discovering an Invisible City

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

Invisible City is the latest film by the Oscar-nominated Canadian documentary filmmaker Hubert Davis about a few residents of Toronto's Regent Park.

"I had an interest in doing a documentary about young black men in at risk areas in Toronto," Davis told Metro.

"The idea was to explore what's going on with these young men and the problems that they are facing. Plus the Regent Park redevelopment was starting at that time, which seemed like an interesting backdrop. The neighborhood was in transition at the same time that the boys we were following were in transition."

The film (which starts a run at The Royal Theatre this week before appearing on TVO later in the month) was a three-year odyssey for the director, who followed two young boys through their last few years of high school.

"Originally the plan was to follow them for a year, but then I realized pretty quickly that it wasn't going to be enough time," revealed the director.

The reason for the extended shoot was for Davis to spend enough time with his subjects to get them open up honestly on camera.

"I think boys of that age are particularly closed up emotionally," said Davis. "If you're a 16-year-old boy it's not the coolest thing to have a camera crew rolling around with you. So, it was very challenging and they often weren't interested in talking. But we just took our time and waited for them to come around and open up."

Davis' documentary focuses on the experiences of two teens named Mikey and Kendell. Their story is highly personal, but one that allowed Davis to explore some fairly broad themes.

"I think the movie really evolved as we were shooting," revealed the director. "When I started it was about of a lot of bigger things. Racial profiling was a hot topic in the news and there were elements of police interaction that I was interested in. Then there were also a lot of issues surrounding the school system that I wanted to explore.

"All of these different threads were compelling to me, but the project got too big. So I decided to just focus on the personal experience of our two kids and through their experience we were able to touch on everything else."

The final result is an illuminating examination of an area of Toronto life that is too often ignored. "

Invisible City begins playing at The Royal Theatre this week.

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TO	Vu	SD	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/3/10	265	353	2	TVO	Meerkat Manor	Meerkat Manor	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		New Tricks		Human Edge (N)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (HDTV) (N)		Kitchen Nightmares (N)		The Deep End (N)		News Hour
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Office	Omni News: Italian Edition (N)		Vivere V	Omni News:	Ugly Betty (HDTV) (N)		Look I Cook
	210	302	6	CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dragons' Den (HDTV) (N)		Republic of Doyle (DVS)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: Special Victims		Mercy (HDTV) (N)		Modern Family	Cougar Town	The Jay Leno Show (N)		News
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Access H.	Criminal Minds (N)		American Idol (HDTV) (N)		CSI: NY "Sanguine Love"		CTV News
	218	345	11	CHCH	*Teen Knight* (1998, Adventure) Kris Lemche, Benjamin Plener.				*The Good Shepherd* ★★ (2004, Mystery) Christian Slater.				News at 11 (N)
	-	-	14	-	Family Guy	The Simpsons	Omni News: S. Asian Edition		Omni News: Cantonese Edition		Two/Half Men	King/Queens	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	George Lopez	The Insider (N)	*Past Sins* (2006, Drama) Lauralee Bell, Rebecca Jenkins.				The Insider	Hitchcock Pres	Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Access H.	Super Bowl-Commercials		Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY "Sanguine Love"		News 4 at 11
	-	385	17	NBC	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Mercy (HDTV) (N)		Law & Order: SVU		The Jay Leno Show (N)		News
	-	386	18	ABC	The New American Road		Modern Family	The Middle (N)	Modern Family	Cougar Town	(10:01) Ugly Betty (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Degrassi	TMZ (N)	Old Christine	The Middle (N)	*Hope Floats* ★ (1998, Romance) Sandra Bullock.				A News
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Human Target (HDTV) (N)		American Idol (HDTV) (N)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	PBS NewsHour	Wait for God	Secrets of Shangri-La		The National Parks: America's Best Idea (HDTV) (DVS)				
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Life Unexpected (HDTV)		Gossip Girl (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Law & Order: Special Victims		WBZ News (N)	What's-Store	Frasier	Frasier	The Office
	298	653	332	TLA	The Tyra Show (N)		According-Jim	Family Guy	KTLA News	KTLA News	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Life Unexp.
news	502	390	26	NW	Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		Badge of Pride		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow Report (Live)		Marijuana Inc.: Pot Industry		American Greed (N)		American Greed		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	OHL Hockey 2010 All-Star Game. From Kingston, Ontario. (Live)						Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	(6:30) Curling Scotties Tournament of Hearts. From Kindersley, Sask. (Live)					NHL Hockey Philadelphia Flyers at Edmonton Oilers.			
	411	457	58	OLN	Ghost Hunters Academy		Destination Truth		Operate-Repo	Operate-Repo	Ghost Hunters Academy		Destin. Truth
	417	406	81	SC	Pass Time	NASCAR Hub	Dangerous Drives (HDTV)		Pass Time (N)	Pass Time (N)	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pass Time
family	551	542	25	YTV	iCarly	That's-Weird	Malcolm-Mid.	Hates Chris	8 Simple Rules	What I Like	Family Biz	To Be Indie	Prank Patrol
	554	544	45	TEL	Scooby-Doo	Total Drama	Total Drama	6TEEN	Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad	Futurama	Robot Chicken
	556	540	51	FAM	Sonny Chance	Suite Life	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School	Cory in House	That's-Raven
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Supernanny		Chef Worthy	Grocery Bag	The Restaurant	The Restaurant	*Too Young to Marry* (2007, Drama)		
	570	580	29	MM	Make It or Break It		disBAND (N)	Video on Trial	Degrassi: TNG	Degrassi: TNG	My Date With...	disBAND	MuchOnDem
	615	520	31	A&E	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Bounty Hunter	Steven Seagal	Steven Seagal	Steven Seagal
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Un Ciclone In Famiglia				George Lopez	George Lopez	Lopez Tonight
	571	581	36	MMM	The Daily Fix		Ranked!		G. Simmons	Gene Simmons	Entourage	Wild 'n Out	mmtop10.ca
	575	583	38	CMT	Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Reba	Reba	According/Jim	According/Jim	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Due South
	616	521	39	SHO	Relic Hunter		*Blind Trust* (2007, Suspense) Jessica Capshaw.				HawthoRNe (N)		NCIS
	620	523	40	BVO	Death at-Opera	Bravo!Videos	Arts & Minds	O'Reagan File	Wingfield	Star Portraits	White Collar		Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Rich Bride Poor Bride		End of Leash	End of Leash	End/Leash	End of Leash	End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	Ice Pilots NWT (N)		Nostradamus Effect (N)		Ice Road Truckers		Ice Pilots NWT (HDTV)		Re-Inventors
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Little Britain	Hot Box	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Agent-Agent	Intervention	Property Virgin	Unsellable	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	College Basketball Mississippi State at Vanderbilt. (Live)				Law & Order: Special Victims		The Office
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Belly* ★ (1998, Crime Drama) Nas, DMX, Taral Hicks.				The Game	The Game	Mo'Nique
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		The Nightmare		Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Supernatural (HDTV) (N)		InnerSpace
	581	566	52	MTV	Peak Season	After	Cribs	Cribs	The Real World		The Real World (N)		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Rescue Ink "No Bull"		Hoarders "Judi and Gail"		Hoarders		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Spoiled Rotten
	603	561	56	FOOD	Ricardo	Fresh-Anna	Challenge		Iron Chef America		Chopped "Sticking to It"		Restaurant
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		No Place Like	Open All Hours	Doc Martin (N)		Unscripted (N)	God Bless	Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		The View (HDTV) (N)		The Dr. Oz Show (N)		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Backyardigans	Night Garden	Max & Ruby	Franklin	Little Bear	Bucket-Dinos	Babar	Big & Small	Max & Ruby
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	300	601	301	M1	*Night Train*	*Cyborg Soldier* (2008, Science Fiction)			*Crank: High Voltage* ★ (2009, Action)			(10:40) *Tropic Thunder*	
	305	612	306	PIX	*Dance Me Out.*	*Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave*			*Mimic* ★★ (1997, Horror) Mira Sorvino, Jeremy Northam.				*Deadbolt*
	520	146	-	DISC	Daily Planet (N)		The Colony (N)		License to Drill		Mayday		Daily Planet
	637	-	-	TVLND	Red Green	Red Green	Fantasy Island		Hart to Hart		Andy Griffith	Phil Silvers	Bizarre
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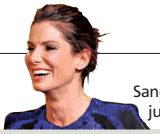

Ms. Congeniality put to the test

Sandra Bullock and her husband Jesse James continue to battle in court with his ex-wife, porn star Janine Lindemulder. The judge denied Lindemulder visitation rights to see Sunny, her six-year-old daughter, E! News reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Follow these celebrities on Twitter...

CelebTweets

JOEL MCHALE doesn't feel like explaining his fashion choices, **LINDSAY LOHAN** needs tech support, **DEMI MOORE** splits talk-show duties with her husband, and **JOHN CLEESE** shows off his modesty.

@joelmchale I'm wearing short shorts right now. Please don't ask why. @lindsaylohan HOW DO I UPLOAD A VIDEO! People always say "ask for help if you need it" i am asking! @mrskutcher Hey just met the Jersey Shore crew! Hubby is going to be so jealous he is over at GMA today instead of the Today Show with me! Hehe! @JohnCleese May you continue to be facinated by me, because I really am a wonderful human being.

METRO WORLD NEWS

A woman's intuition

AKA: GOOGLE Katy Perry already had an inkling that Russell Brand was going to pop the question, thanks to the power of the Internet. "Unfortunately, I still Google myself sometimes. I saw it on Google alerts. I'm going to be honest," she tells E! News. Brand had been spotted shopping for engagement rings, with the trip widely reported across the web.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Says 'no' to 'yes' people

AND 'YES' TO BEYOND THE GRAVE GREETINGS Janet Jackson still expects her late brother Michael to call her, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer — and younger sister of the Thriller star, who died last June from acute Propofol intoxication, at the age of 50 — says her grief gets easier with every day that passes, but she would do anything to hear him speak again.

"It gets sad sometimes because, I don't know, you think your phone is going to ring and you hear that voice calling your name," she says.

"But, yeah, life goes on and everybody grieves differently. And every day is different. Some days it's much easier than others."

Jackson, 43, also revealed Michael's untimely passing made her realize she needed to make changes in her life. She said in an interview with Wonderland magazine, "A lot of people in this industry have a lot of 'yes' people. That I can tell you I do not have.

"A lot has changed in my life this year, a lot of changes, I think I'm kind of heading in a different direction for sure."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Digging Doctor Dolittle

HE UNDERSTANDS WHAT SHE'S SAYING, EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T At the hospital over the past few days to visit her "Nana," who had a tumour removed Jan. 29, Jessica Simpson has been passing the hours admiring the "cute doctors" — and it looks like they are returning the attention, people.com reports.

On Monday the pop star — who's single again — Tweeted, "Bored at the hospital. I think I'm gonna go look for some hot doctors. McDreamy? McSteamy? Clooney? Let the search begin …"

And it appears she found her medic — who delivered just the right prescription ... a spelling lesson.

On Jan. 30, Simpson attempted to quote Bob Dylan when she Tweeted, "You can fake an orgasm (sic) but you can't fake laughter." Hours later, however, she clarified her message by saying that she meant "orgasm," not "orgasim."

The fix came, she Tweeted, as a result of "one of the cute doctors here at the hospital informed me of my misspelled tweet. Hmm ... was he hitting on me?"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

I had an affair with the dragon

HE SAID IT, NOT ME. SEE WHAT I DID THERE, GERARD? Gerard Butler admits that he's used to rumours of romance popping up every time he co-stars with someone in a film, as they have with Jennifer Aniston recently.

But he hopes the rumour mill will give it a rest for his next film, the animated How to Train Your Dragon, in which Butler works with fellow Scotsman Craig Furgeson.

"I wouldn't be surprised if I was linked to Craig," Butler tells the Daily Record.

"But maybe they'll come up with a way to say I had an affair with the dragon.

"Or that I had sex with all of them."

METRO WORLD NEWS

Love is a many splendid thing

IT'S ALSO A MANY GENDERED THING Amy Winehouse is reportedly no stranger to same-sex relationships, but she doesn't see why that should stop her reuniting with ex-husband Blake Fielder-Civil, according to News of the World.

"I have had relationships with other women but that doesn't mean I don't still love Blake," Winehouse tells friends, according to the newspaper. "There is something about being with a woman that is very satisfying. I don't care what people think about me being (bi-sexual). I do what feels good."

METRO WORLD NEWS

On the road to rehab

AGAIN A judge in Los Angeles is sending the troubled son of Ryan O'Neal and the late Farrah Fawcett back to rehab after more than a month in jail. The judge placed Redmond O'Neal back on probation and sentenced to an intense residential rehab program during a brief hearing Thursday. The 25-year-old has been jailed since Dec. 29 for violating his probation on a previous drug conviction. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Michael Tynan says if O'Neal succeeds at the rehab program, he will then be sent to a sober-living facility.

METRO WORLD NEWS

etalk's Lainey Lui dishes out celeb dirt in three's

Three Talk

with Lainey Lui

JOHNNY DEPP. Johnny Depp is the reigning People Magazine Sexiest Man Alive and one the most popular actors in the world. He is also one of the most private. With worldwide career box office earnings totalling more than $4 billion, Johnny has accumulated a personal fortune that has enabled him to live in relative obscurity in relation to his fame and, in comparison to his peers Brad Pitt and George Clooney, fiercely guard his personal life. Here are three things you might not know about Johnny Depp:

ONE He arrived in Hollywood intending to pursue a record deal with his band. It was Nicolas Cage who persuaded him to become an actor. The two are still friends and Depp was rumoured to have offered to bail Cage out of his recent financial troubles.

TWO Depp developed a close relationship with one of his literary idols Hunter S Thompson. When Thompson committed suicide in 2005, Depp paid for most of the memorial.

THREE Depp regularly dresses up as Captain Jack Sparrow, his character from Pirates of the Caribbean, for visits to the children's ward of the hospital where his daughter Lily Rose was once treated for a near fatal infection.

Lainey Lui is a reporter for etalk and runs the popular gossip site, LaineyGossip.com. As part of CTV's Olympic Broadcast Team, Lainey is on the ground in Whistler reporting on entertainment news from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

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Thursday Partly cloudy 0° / -6°
Friday Variable -1° / -8°
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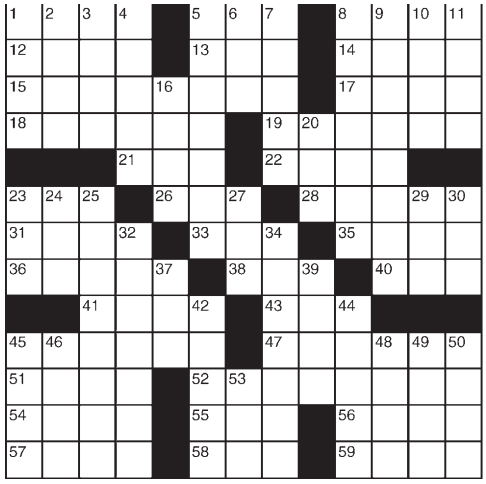
Take Five



ACROSS

1 Vicinity
5 Inhabitant (Abbr.)
8 Detail
12 Paper quantity
13 Kanga's kid
14 Undressed
15 No. 51 on the table
17 Unforeseen problem
18 Sarajevo's land
19 Baffler
21 Frequently
22 Tango moves
23 Antonym (Abbr.)
26 Teeny tale
28 Attack dog, e.g.
31 Island dance
33 Help
35 Ms. Moore
36 "The final frontier"
38 Support system?
40 Gist
41 Brass instrument
43 Mischief-maker
45 Scales
47 Buccaneer
51 Top-notch
52 No. 1 on the table
54 Whirled
55 Listener
56 Monetary supply
57 Fixes a skirt
58 Agent
59 Collections

DOWN

1 Bedouin
2 Nevada city
3 Dines on
4 Acid type
5 Zagreb's land
6 Charged bit
7 Tinkered (with)
8 Flat
9 No. 74 on the table
10 Cheese choice
11 Ginormous
16 Irk
20 Penpoint
23 Surprise cries
24 Young seal
25 No. 78 on the table
27 Chest protector
29 Ostrich's cousin
30 Umbrella-frame part
32 Keen senses of judgment
34 Hang on the line, maybe
37 Recede
39 Eastern bigwig
42 Fireplace residue
44 Campus staffers
45 Money
46 Bound along
48 Chills and fever
49 Bivouac setup
50 Make — meet
53 Mouth, slangily

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

4			6				7	8
	9			8				
6	3				2		4	
1		6		5	3			
			9	1		7		2
	8		1				9	6
				2			1	
7	2				6			5

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

S	O	A	P	■	F	L	Y	■
O	A	H	U	■	L	A	O	■
S	T	E	P	D	O	W	N	■
O	H	M	■	U	R	N	■	S
■	■	■	U	S	A	■	Y	O
A	G	E	N	T	■	Y	A	W
L	O	R	D	■	C	A	P	■
B	O	R	E	D	O	M	■	M
■	■	■	R	O	W	■	H	E
A	B	A	F	T	■	B	O	A
W	A	C	O	■	F	O	O	T
L	I	M	O	■	D	O	E	■
S	T	E	T	■	A	N	Y	■

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
D	A	N	G	■	■	■	■	■
O	R	E	O	■	■	■	■	■
W	E	A	R	■	■	■	■	■
S	N	A	R	E	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
N	I	N	G	■	■	■	■	■
D	R	U	B	■	■	■	■	■
A	N	S	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	D	S	■	■	■	■	■	■
T	E	P	■	■	■	■	■	■
E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
D	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

9	3	4	2	8	5	6	1	7
5	8	7	9	1	6	4	2	3
6	2	1	3	4	7	8	9	5
3	7	8	1	9	2	5	4	6
1	6	9	5	7	4	2	3	8
2	4	5	6	3	8	1	7	9
7	9	6	4	5	1	3	8	2
8	1	2	7	6	3	9	5	4
4	5	3	8	2	9	7	6	1

On the web

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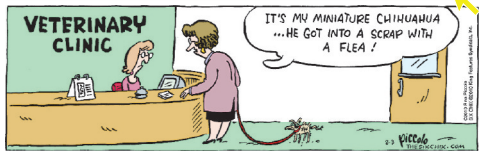

Metro Recipe of the Day

Sausages with Mustard Mashed Potatoes and Red Onion Gravy

INGREDIENTS:

1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
2 tsp (10 mL) brown sugar
2 lb (1 kg) potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
8 sausages
1 tbsp (15 mL) all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups (300 mL) hot beef stock
6 3/4 tbsp (100 mL) red wine
1 tbsp (15 mL) Worcestershire sauce
6 3/4 tbsp (100 mL) milk, warmed
31/2 tbsp (50 mL) butter
3 tsp (15 mL) whole-grain mustard

METHOD:

1. Heat oil in frying pan. Add onion and sprinkle with sugar, then cook gently, stirring from time to time, until onion is lightly caramelized. Preheat broiler.

2. Boil potatoes in lightly salted water until tender; grill sausages, turning regularly, until evenly browned.

3. Sprinkle flour over caramelized onion, stir and cook 1 minute, then stir in stock, wine and Worcestershire sauce. Boil, then reduce heat and leave to simmer.

4. Drain potatoes and return to pot. Mash with warm milk, butter and mustard to taste. Spoon mound of mashed potato on to each plate, lay sausages on top and spoon over gravy.

SERVES 4

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For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Do something that even by your standards is a bit over the top. You need to remind yourself that sometimes life can be taken too seriously.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You may be having your doubts about a commitment that only a short while ago you thought was the best thing you had ever signed up to.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Something will not work out the way you expected today but don't sweat it because it does not matter that much.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Something will happen over the next few days that compels you to reconsider a belief or opinion you have never had cause to question before.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
What you are about to do may not be to everyone's tastes but you are not doing it for them, you are doing it for you, and nothing else matters.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
As a Virgo you are so well organized, but not everyone is as in control of their lives as you are, so make allowances.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Everything will go well for you today so long as you don't get distracted by things that are of no real importance.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
If someone offers you their help you should think long and hard before accepting. Will there be something you have to do for them in return?

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
If you don't know why a loved one is acting a little bit cold towards you it is probably because you have said or done something they do not approve of.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
According to the planets you have been working too hard and need to go easier on yourself over the next few days.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Chances are you have allowed too many people to get away with too many things in recent weeks.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Don't expect people you deal with today, at home or at work, to think logically or act in predictable ways.

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HWY: 6.3 L/100KM 45 MPG CITY: 7.7 L/100KM 37 MPG

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Crash Test Rating NHTSA - Frontal impacts

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"Don't Pay Until May" (90 day payment deferral) applies to purchase financing offers on all new 2010 Kia models. No interest will accrue during the first 60 days of the finance contract. After this period interest starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest monthly over the term of the contract. **0% financing available on 2010 Rio/Rio5/Forte. Cash back amount varies by model and trim. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455 excluded. ^MSRP for 2011 Sorento (SR540B) is $23,995. Delivery and destination fees of $1,650 excluded.*Monthly lease payment for 2010 Soul (S0550A)/2011 Sorento (SR540B) is $199/$299 for 48 months at 3.9%/4.9% lease APR with a $1,580/$2,150 down payment and includes a $300/0 lease credit. Total lease obligation is $11,155/$16,522 with the option to purchase at end of term for $5,882/$10,658. Delivery and destination fees of $1,650 excluded. Lease has 20,000 km/ year allowance (other packages available) and $0.10/km for excess. ‡ Purchase price for 2010 Rio EX MT (RO542A)/2010 Forte (F0540A) is $9,995/$13,995 and includes a cash rebate of $3,700/$1,800 based on an MSRP of $13,695/$15,795. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455 excluded. All offers exclude license, insurance, other taxes, down payment and variable dealer administration fees. Other dealer charges may be required at the time of purchase. Other lease and finance options also available. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. Certain restrictions may apply. >Highway/city fuel consumption for 2010 Rio EX (RO542A) is 5.8 L (49MPG)/7.1 L (40 MPG); 2010 Soul 1.6L MT (S0550A) is 6.3 L (45 MPG)/7.7 L (37 MPG); 2010 Forte EX (F0540A)is 5.8 L / (49 MPG)/8.1 L (34 MPG); 2011 Sorento 2.4L MT (SR540B) is 7.4 L (38 MPG)/10.6 L (27 MPG). The actual fuel consumption of these vehicles may vary. These estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the Government of Canada publication EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide. §The Bluetooth® word mark and logo are registered trademarks and are owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc. Some vehicles advertised may include optional accessories or after-sale equipment and may not be exactly as shown. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. Offer ends March 1, 2010. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.